

Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

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YOUNG ADULT CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP FORMATION FOR A
POST-CHRISTIAN AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

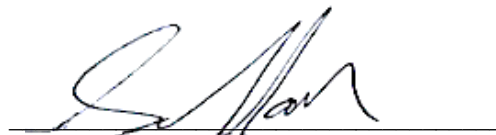
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YOUNG ADULT CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP FORMATION FOR A
POST-CHRISTIAN AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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PENELOPE MARTIN
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ABSTRACT

Young Adult Christian Leadership Formation for a Post-Christian Australian Context

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Doctor of Ministry

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Stirling Theological College has always been an institution adapting to the challenges of forming people for leadership, mission and ministry. Birthed as a training college for Churches of Christ in Australia, Stirling has had a fruitful history of training people for leadership, most particularly for local church congregations. In light of traditional models of training, this project proposes an innovative framework of leadership formation, that equips young people to lead in the diverse settings of everyday life and work, rather than simply for dedicated ecclesial contexts.

This project develops a University accredited formation program to assist young adults to reimagine Christian leadership beyond vocational ministry, and participate in collective, formative, Kingdom-based practices in order to bring about positive social change. Part One of this paper discusses the history of Stirling Theological College with a focus on leadership formation. Following this is an outline of the challenges of forming emerging generations in credible Christian leadership and the resulting implications.

The second part of this project provides a theological foundation for leadership formation, which begins with a review of relevant literature on leadership character, spiritual formation and future leadership trajectories. Two biblical studies on leadership, one from the Pastoral Epistles and one based on the characteristics of the Kingdom of God are also included. Key principles derived from both studies are then applied in a new vision for leadership formation that integrates academic resources, formative practices and theological reflection.

The third part of this project outlines the practical dimensions of creating a new unit of study, for young adults, focused on Christian leadership formation. This includes implementing academic resources and numerous practical elements. Finally there is an evaluation of the pilot project, concluding with reflections on the value of the work and the inspiring and transformative potential of such a program.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
PART ONE: COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND CHALLENGE	
CHAPTER 1: HISTORY OF STIRLING THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE AND PRESENT CONTEXT	10
CHAPTER 2: CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS FOR EMERGING LEADERSHIP FORMATION	26
PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION	
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW	41
CHAPTER 4: A THEOLOGY OF SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP FORMATION	67
PART THREE: GOALS AND STRATEGY	
CHAPTER 5: COURSE DESIGN AND PLAN	93
CHAPTER 6: IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES	107
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	125
APPENDICES	131
BIBLIOGRAPHY	146

INTRODUCTION

There is a deep challenge for the Church today to encourage and develop a new generation of Christian leaders, whose minds and hearts have been shaped in wisdom, and who are ready to serve God in many diverse contexts in this swiftly changing world. Stirling Theological College is a place that has been committed to exploring and addressing such challenges with creative intention. Over the years Stirling has adapted and responded to numerous shifts in both global and local culture and various arising social, ethical and moral issues in ways that have sought to be indicative of the College's role in educating and training Christian leaders. In the last few years the development of the role of Dean of Leadership Formation, which I fill at present, has been a significant allocation of time and resources by Stirling to continue to prioritize the need for ongoing research and innovative development into the area of forming Christian leaders for the future. One of the immediate areas of work has been to review various aspects of education and training and to consider whether our current models are viable in shaping a new generation of young adult Christian leaders today.

Young people in Australia inhabit, and are seeking to contribute to, an incredibly beautiful, but very complex world. There is no doubt that the socio-cultural landscape of Australia today is continuing to change in response to various global issues and technological advances. Religious ideology and radicalization, immense humanitarian concerns resulting from the refugee crisis facing particularly Syria, natural disasters, increased nationalism and security concerns, climate change, epidemic proportions of mental health complexity, increased demand for inclusion and equality, are just some of

said issues. Each of these issues are reported and filtered through the all-pervasive vehicle of globalized media technology and ultimately impact young people on a local level in the integration of belief and behavior, pursuing purpose and meaning, embracing or resisting diversity and wrestling with discontinuous change.

Stirling is attempting to be more intentional in asking questions, challenging assumptions, listening deeply and investing in diligent research in the area of Christian Leadership Formation, in the hope of offering some guidance to, not only our denominational context of Churches of Christ, but also the broader ecumenical context of the University of Divinity and articulate a hopeful and integrated model for the future. It is the purpose of this doctoral project, and in my role as Dean of Leadership Formation, to rigorously explore and articulate a vision of Christian leadership formation for young emerging leaders.

The majority of Christian leadership training offered today through various organizations and seminaries, Stirling included, is focused primarily on preparing people for ministry in the Church.¹ The majority of scholarship on “Christian leadership for an emerging generation” or “the future of Christian leadership,” with the exception of a small few, continue to focus on structured ecclesial contexts. This is challenging when one considers that the Church in Australia is in decline,² based on falling local church

¹ Les Ball, *Transforming Theology. Student Experience and Transformative Learning in Undergraduate Theological Education*, (Preston, VIC: Mosaic Press, 2012), 53.

²Ruth Powell, Miriam Pepper and Sam Sterland, “How Many Australians Attend Church In An Average Week?”, NCLS Research, July 7, 2017, <http://www.ncls.org.au/research/australians-attending-church/>; McCrindle Research, *Faith and Belief in Australia*, “A Demographic Snapshot of Christianity and Church Attenders in Australia,” Accessed June 5, 2019, <https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blogarchive/a-demographic-snapshot-of-christianity-and-church-attenders-in-australia/>; Keith Farmer, “The Future of The Church in Australia,” Willow Creek Australia, July 7, 2015, 3, <https://willowcreek.org.au/the-future-of-the-church-in-australia/>; as well as census findings from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

attendances, the aging of congregations and clergy³ and the increased negativity in regard to Church contribution to Australian society.⁴

Young Christians today, despite the articulated decline in the local church, are increasingly comfortable to navigate issues like spirituality and religion.⁵ They are also eager to explore their purposeful contribution to society and the wider world.⁶ Such “contribution” looks less like “traditional evangelism”⁷ and more like what Leonard Sweet describes as “nudging,” or love in action and alerting people to pay attention to “the God who is already there.”⁸

There is more work to be done in training and forming young Christians for purposeful contribution and Christian leadership beyond simply a maintaining a Christian organization. The interest and focus of this project is exploring what Christian leadership looks like practically in the many and diverse contexts of what is understood as everyday

³ McCrindle Research, *Faith and Belief in Australia*, “A Demographic Snapshot of Christianity and Church Attenders in Australia”; Christian Research Association, “Profile of Australian Christian Clergy,” accessed September 6, 2019, <https://cra.org.au/profile-of-australian-christian-clergy/>; Ruth Powell, Sam Sterland and Miriam Pepper, “Demographics Paint a Picture of Local Church Leaders,” NCLS research, August 2018, <http://www.ncls.org.au/news/demographics-of-senior-church-leaders>.

⁴ M. Pepper and R. Powell, *Attitudes To Religion in Australian Society*, September, 2018, <http://www.ncls.org.au/news/attitudes-to-religion>.

⁵ McCrindle Research, *Faith and Belief in Australia*, (Baulkham Hills, NSW: McCrindle Research Pty Ltd, 2017), 24.

⁶ E. Carlisle et al., *Youth Survey Report 2018*, Mission Australia, accessed September 6, 2019, 30-31. The survey shows the high percentage of respondents who are involved in volunteering and pursuing leadership interests and activities.

⁷ Kate Shellnut, “Half of Millennial Christians Say It’s Wrong to Evangelize,” *Christianity Today*, February 6, 2019, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2019/february/half-of-millennial-christians-wrong-to-evangelize-barna.html>; Crossover, “The Failure of Evangelism,” Accessed September 6, 2019, <https://www.crossover.org.au/the-failure-of-evangelism/>.

⁸ Leonard Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who’s Already There*, (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 28.

life and non-religious work. As history has demonstrated, the work of God's tenacious and irresistible Kingdom will continue to develop adapt grow and bring life and hope in vibrant and creative ways into the future, with or without the local church on the corner, preferably with the church. The question is how?

The reflective interest of this doctoral work is to ask what it means to form people for Christian leadership for the myriad contexts of life and work. It is also essential to consider how one might even imagine what Christian leadership looks like in public and vulnerable spaces in the context of Post-Christian Australia today. The practical interest of this project is then to design a new tertiary training and formation pathway.

I am passionate about the contribution that young people can make to the way Australians pursue life together in creative and adaptive ways generally, and more importantly what they can offer in regard to theology, faith, worship and spirituality. Fostering interest and passion in the emerging generations to integrate more intentionally life and faith, work and faith, neighbourhood community and faith is, arguably, the hopeful future of Christian leadership.⁹

This begs the question what is leadership, and more importantly for this doctoral project, what is Christian leadership? When one considered leadership traditionally, the mind was drawn to characteristics such as inspiration and vision, followed closely by a strategic skill set or experience deemed necessary for leading people and organizations.

⁹ Certainly recent books such as Karina Kreminski, *Urban Spirituality. Embodying God's Mission in the Neighbourhood*, (Skyforest, CA: Urban Loft Publishers, 2018); Andrew Menzies and Dean Phelan, *Kingdom Communities. Shining the Light of Christ Through Faith, Hope and Love* (Reservoir, VIC: Morningstar Publishing, 2018); and Kara Martin, *Workship. How to Use Your Work To Worship God*, (Midview City, Singapore: Graceworks Private Limited, 2017); are examples of a growing and hopeful body of work that is addressing this creative future.

Such characteristics generally included things like the ability to delegate, demonstrable confidence and commitment, persuasive communication skills, the ability to set and meet goals, and broad management proficiencies such as managing conflict or decision making.¹⁰ For example Tegan Jones for *Lifehack* wrote in a recent article, “Good leadership is about acquiring and honing skills.”¹¹ Whilst this is true, it also a limited view. More broadly writers and thinkers are realizing that leadership is not only about power, control and a specific skill set. Simon Walker in his book *The Undefended Leader* says, “Leadership is about who you are, not what you know or what skills you have.”¹²

Increasingly writers are honing in on the language of influence in leadership.¹³ John Maxwell once went so far as to exert, “The true measure of leadership is influence. Nothing more. Nothing less.”¹⁴ Whilst Maxwell’s definition is perhaps an oversimplification, one cannot deny the power of influence in leadership. Interestingly the factors that result in an individual being able to exert influence in a particular context

¹⁰ For many examples see articles from *Entrepreneur*, *Forbes* and *Lifehack*.

¹¹ Tegan Jones, “10 Leadership Qualities Revealed by the World’s Most Successful Leaders,” *Lifehack*, August 7, 2018, <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/10-impressive-characteristics-great-leaders-have.html>.

¹² Simon Walker, *The Undefended Leader* (Carlisle, UK: Piquant Editions, 2010), 9.

¹³ Tim Irwin, *Extraordinary Influence. How Great Leaders Bring Out the Best in Others*, (NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2018); Jocelyn Davis, *The Art of Quiet Influence. Timeless Wisdom for Leading Without Authority*, (Boston: Nicholas Brealey, 2019); University of Florida, “Leading by Influence,” *Maximize Your Leadership Potential*, accessed October 14, 2018, http://training.hr.ufl.edu/resources/LeadershipToolkit/job_aids/LeadingbyInfluence.pdf

¹⁴ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow them and People will Follow You*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 11.

are things like credibility and trust, relational empathy and consistency and the ability to be humble and teachable.¹⁵

If then leadership influence is directly related to characteristics like credibility and trust, it is important to acknowledge that the modern Church has struggled considerably in these areas in recent times. Peter Sherlock says, “The dominant perception in the square of public debate is that Christians are abusers, hypocrites, and bigots. . . I’m not arguing that all of these perceptions are true, but we have to acknowledge that these perceptions exist, and that all of them have at least some basis in fact.”¹⁶ Therefore, any thought of being a Christian leader, exerting influence, outside the Church in a non-faith context, seems to be challenging, especially when often the motivation for Christian leadership influence has been overtly evangelistic, to bring people into the church as a measure of success.

A Kingdom-oriented model of leadership is fundamental in building a vision for how future leaders are formed, to address the issues of credibility and trust in order to practice sustainable Christian leadership in everyday contexts. Such a model will emphasise the character of Christ as one who embodied the humble, integrated and practical Kingdom of God, made manifest the good news of the Kingdom for people everywhere, in so doing brought about positive transformation and salvation, and calls his followers to do likewise. The purpose of this project is to reimagine and begin to redefine

¹⁵ University of Florida, “Leading by Influence”; Mark Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 97.

¹⁶ Peter Sherlock, “Why Australia Needs Theology,” The 2017 Barry Marshall Lecture, Trinity College Theological School, University of Divinity, August 9, 2017, <https://www.trinity.unimelb.edu.au/getmedia/6ce2f214-cbbe-40da-8a75-cda1cbea55c8/Why-Australia-Needs-Theology.aspx>, 2-3.

what such Kingdom-oriented leadership looks like practically, and to demonstrate the need, the design and the implementation of a new method of formation-based leadership training for an emerging generation of young people, 18 to 28 years old, in Australia.

Part One of this paper provides an overview of Stirling Theological College, the context in which this project is located. Chapter 1 introduces the college and gives a brief historical outline, with a focus on the changing ethos of leadership language and training over the years. This chapter also outlines current models of thinking and course work at Stirling in leadership and formation providing a summary of the philosophical basis on which new initiatives in leadership formation can emerge. Chapter 2 examines the various challenges and limitations of leadership development and formation today including: the possibilities of leadership formation in an instantaneous and socially-networked environment and the lack of sustainable models and mentors. Chapter 2 also highlights the challenges of Christian leadership in light of present cultural perceptions about religion and public life. Finally, there is a summary of challenges, which creates a backdrop against which specific needs for training and development will be clearly articulated.

Part Two articulates the theological basis for the project, by means of a literature review and an examination of biblical texts relating to Christian leadership. Chapter 3 will review a variety of literature that will first identify the essential relationship between leadership and character and the impact of that relationship on credible Christian leadership. Next, the nature of leadership development as spiritual formation will be explored and will present a case for emerging leadership training to be grounded in the notion of integrated formation. Finally, the last two reviews will focus upon the future of

Christian leadership, taking into account unique characteristics and implications of emerging sociological generations and cultural context.

Chapter 4 will firstly explore the nature of a more traditional biblical model of Christian leadership, as well as detailing the theological complexities of understanding ministry, mission and evangelism through a lens of “success” and “failure.” Following this a Kingdom-oriented approach to leadership will then be presented which will lead to a deeper articulation about the nature and character of God’s Kingdom and the role of a leader that embodies Kingdom characteristics. Finally, a new vision for leadership formation will be presented that embraces deeper spiritual practices and an integrated approach to theology, work and the every day.

Part Three presents the strategy for developing a training program for emerging Christian leaders in Australia. Chapter 5 will develop a practical training plan designed to involve up to twenty young adult students in an accredited formation program that will provide a structure for collective practical experimentation in, and exploration of, Christian leadership in Australia. Concurrent to the introduction of a formation-based focus on leadership training, participants will be challenged to engage in practical spiritual disciplines, practice deep-listening as they engage with profiled Christian leaders, as well as explore the practical dimensions of peer-based reflection. The formation program will be run in collaboration with faculty, mentors and local/international Christian leaders who will contribute wisdom and stories in an integrative learning environment.

Chapter 6 will outline the implementation of the doctoral project. The curriculum for an accredited formation program will be included along with the specific methods of

course engagement, resources for assessment and evaluative tools. The formation course being implemented covers a one-semester timeline of engagement, couched within a broader suite of tertiary subjects. There will be a clear emphasis on formation practices, Kingdom-embodied leadership and making change in the world. The implementation must necessarily align with its stated goals and University of Divinity learning outcomes, while ideally allowing flexibility and adaptation in light of emerging observations and learning. Finally, an evaluation of the project will be articulated and recommendations will be made for ongoing emerging leadership formation programs at Stirling and in the wider body of the University of Divinity.

There is a growing need to engage formatively with a younger generation of Christian leaders today. Especially in light of the changing nature of faith and practice in Australia, optimistic contributions from the emerging generation could bring fresh and transformative possibilities to Christian faith in Australia into the future. This is the heart and hope of this doctoral project.

PART ONE

COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND CHALLENGE

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY OF STIRLING THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE AND PRESENT CONTEXT

Humble Beginnings “College of the Bible” (1907-1910)

On 12 February 1907, the College of the Bible, now known as Stirling Theological College, held its inaugural session. The establishment of a dedicated Churches of Christ Bible College in Australia came as a response to the “recognised need to train people involved in preaching and evangelism.”¹ After various early attempts to provide training classes in Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne a symposium was published in 1905 entitled, “What steps must we take to prevent our young men going to America to study?”² It was clearly recognised, in Churches of Christ in Australia, that there was an intentional need to advance the training that was available to men³ who desired to enter Christian ministry both locally and abroad, and therefore a small domestic school was

¹ Ken Clinton and Keith Bowes, *All to the Glory of God: Seventy-five Years of Ministerial Training by the College of the Bible 1907-1981* (Melbourne, VIC: College of the Bible Publications, 1982), 5.

² Ibid., 7.

³ I have used non-gender-inclusive language here because training was only available for men at this time.

established to begin with, as a live-in facility, designed essentially “to provide preachers for local churches.”⁴

The humble beginnings of the College came with clearly articulated purpose. The preparation of students for the “Ministry of the Word,” for “service in Missionary fields,” and also “for usefulness in the Work of the Church for positions other than Evangelists”⁵ were the clearly stated aims that were accompanied by a suite of subjects designed to that end. Training was offered as a diploma that incorporated Biblical Studies, Exegesis, Greek and Hebrew, Church History and Doctrine, Philosophy, Homiletics, Apologetics and Biblical Criticism, the design of which emphasized a new “standard” of Christian education.⁶

When the College was formally established twenty-one men enrolled into a rigorous three-year course of study with the primary emphasis and effort of the training going into building skills for work in local churches.⁷ Some shorter courses were designed to equip participants for various church roles including Sunday School officers, teachers and workers. In these early years the College underwent various transitions, led by the Principal, Henry George Harward. Classes began in a private home on Rathdowne Street, Carlton and then moved to a dedicated schoolroom in a Lygon Street chapel, then finally to the 4.5-acre property at Glen Iris which would be the home of the College for

⁴ Graeme Chapman, *Challenge and Achievement: Celebrating One Hundred Years* (Melbourne: Churches of Christ Theological College, 2007), 7.

⁵ Prospectus of the College of the Bible, “The College Prospectus,” *The Australian Christian* IX:37 (September 13, 1906): 467.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Chapman, *Challenge and Achievement*, 13.

the following seventy-eight years.⁸ Although reasonably limited in resources and focus, the beginnings of the institution known then as the College of the Bible exemplified an intentional and robust effort toward a high level of Christian leadership training, on which basis the College expanded and matured in the ensuing years.

Glen Iris and Emerging Clarity of Purpose (1911-1989)

After the initial institutional consolidation, the College began to grow and change under the guidance of various key leaders and teachers. In his first year as Principal in 1911, Alexander Russell Main articulated a clear statement of the purpose of the College, which, even today, continues to give direction to the organisation⁹ as follows:

The chief purpose of the College of the Bible is to provide Biblical instruction on liberal and scientific principles for students, and to furnish ample facilities in education for the Christian ministry. It is also the purpose to encourage an impartial and unbiased investigation of the Christian Scriptures, and in the spirit of devout faith in the Divine Word, freely to lay under tribute every source of light and truth available to modern scholarship. This College seeks to train good men for great tasks, and to make them strong to meet the needs of the age in which they live. Pursuant to such ideals, the courses of study are selected, and in all departments of instruction, an evangelistic spirit is maintained in order that together the faith, the inspiration and the usefulness of the student may be cultivated.¹⁰

During the years the College was situated at Glen Iris, five different Principals led the community.¹¹ Each of them enabled the College to progress in unique ways,

⁸ Kerrie Handasyde, "Churches of Christ Theological College Centenary," *Australian Churches of Christ Historical Society Digest* 54 (February 2007): 2.

⁹ A small excerpt of A.R. Main's statement is still included on the website of Stirling Theological College www.stirling.edu.au.

¹⁰ A.R. Main as quoted in Clinton and Bowes, *All to the Glory of God*, 16.

¹¹ A.R. Main, T.H. Scambler, E.L. Williams, Keith Bowes and Bill Tabbernee.

contributing not only to the training of the students enrolled, but to the movement of Churches of Christ in Australia at large. Particularly Main made a significant contribution, “as editor of ‘The Australian Christian’ [A.R. Main] was regarded throughout the brotherhood as the spokesman for our position. No other editor, before or since, has used the journal’s editorial columns to such effect in presenting our doctrinal position.”¹²

For many years the College’s emphasis on Christian leadership was aligned with a more traditional model and purpose of “practical training for ministry,”¹³ as encouraged by churches and denominational officials. Chapman explains that in earlier times, the view was that, “theological education should be primarily concerned with practical training for ministry, Churches need effective ministers.”¹⁴ Ministry was understood in two ways. The first was the concept that ministry applied to all who served in the Church, for example congregational volunteers who assisted with various duties; the second was related to those were appointed to a specific role in the ministry of the Church, for example minister, elder, deacon.¹⁵ In each case the focus and context for leadership was

¹² E.L. Williams, *Living Responsibly: Reflections by E. Lyall Williams; Biography by A. E. White* (Melbourne: Vital Publications, 1976), 29.

¹³ Graham Chapman, *Spiritual Development. The Purpose of Theological Education*, (Melbourne: College of the Bible, 1986), 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ A.R. Main, *First Principles: Studies in Biblical Truth* (Melbourne: Austral Publishing Company, 1911), 75-79. Main outlines a significant focus on the various roles of church leadership drawing on the Pastoral Epistles as well as broader biblical texts, under his heading of “Ministry.”

generally a local church context, as Main states, “ministers of the church are all who in any way serve the church,”¹⁶ and also often limited to men.

As years went by, however, changes naturally occurred. At a time in history when women were still limited in terms of employment and education in Australia, only being allowed the vote in 1902, the College, in an act of some significance commenced enrolling women students in 1912.¹⁷ Later as the world wrestled with enormous complexity through world wars, depressions, anti-authoritarian movements in the 1950s and 1960s and the anti-war movement, to mention just a few, the College adapted and responded. No longer could ideas of faith and leadership be limited to a small local church context; beliefs and behaviours had to bump up against the real world, real issues that demanded coherent, thoughtful, theological responses. Ethical and moral concerns as well as issues of justice emerged as ones to wrestle deeply with.

T.H. Scambler (Principal from 1939-1944), in good company with many others throughout history, came under some criticism for engaging with this wrestle and pushing forward with new ways of thinking. He was committed to pursuing not only intentional Christian unity, becoming well respected interdenominationally, but also to raising the profile of the importance of public engagement. He willingly engaging in debates and become a member of the, “Left Book Club, a meeting and discussion point for socialistically minded folk ranging from out and out Communists to mild Christian liberals. Scambler was there because he believed it was in the interests of the church.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Clinton and Bowes, *All to the Glory of God*, 19.

¹⁸ Ibid., 30.

In similar ways his successors, E.L. Williams and Keith Bowes continued the commitment to position the College and theological education, “in light of contemporary understandings and culture.”¹⁹

In his twenty-nine years as Principal Williams continued to be formative in shaping the focus of College more broadly and integrally. When asked to summarise the purpose of the College in his era Williams said, “To provide theological education and training for the ministry of the gospel.”²⁰ Williams intentionally avoids mentioning the church implying that the training of Christian leaders beyond the confines of the local church was now actively encouraged and explored. Williams introduced a broader range of subjects to cater for an expanding understanding of Christian leadership, including Systematic and Contemporary Theology, Ethics and a focus on Pastoral Care.²¹

During the 1980s and 1990s it became remarkably noticeable how awards in theological education²² as well as the demographic of the student body was markedly different than when the College began. At least a quarter of students were female and a woman was appointed to the Faculty.²³ Many students were also married with families and the average age of students had increased from 20 to 25 years of age.²⁴

¹⁹ Chapman, *Challenge and Achievement*, 32.

²⁰ Clinton and Bowes, *All to the Glory of God*, 30.

²¹ Ibid., 31.

²² In 1976 the then Melbourne College of Divinity introduced the Bachelor of Theology. This was a significantly more rigorous and regarded award than previous offerings.

²³ Robin Haskell was appointed at the end of 1979. Besides being secretary of the Board of Management, she co-ordinated the college office and lectured in ministry subjects. Chapman, *Challenge and Achievement*, 35.

²⁴ Clinton and Bowes, *All to the Glory of God*, 44.

Throughout these years theological education for Christian leaders began to encompass the cultivation of skills that integrated the idea of leadership with the notion of “formation.” As these changes began to take shape students were encouraged to develop, “an understanding of oneself, of others, of the nature of relationships and of the world in which the church was situated . . . [which also] included an appreciation of the fundamentals and fulness of the Gospel and an exploration of one’s giftedness, as well as the cultivation of an openness to new expressions of ministry.”²⁵

Churches of Christ Theological College Mulgrave (1989-2011)

The 1980s represented a time of significant change for the College of the Bible. Under the leadership of Principal Bill Tabbernee and in response to an aging faculty, many key staff positions were changed and a younger teaching staff began to emerge. At the same time other part-time and sessional appointments were made including the augmentation of the office staff and systems of administrative support. Each of these transitions was ultimately to pave the way for a significant change in the relocation of the College from Glen Iris to Mulgrave in 1989. As well as this important change, the name of the College also changed to the Churches of Christ Theological College, to more immediately identify the College as belonging to Churches of Christ.

Between the years of 1981 and 1984 a new set of goals were determined for the coming decade. In response to a review of the courses on offer for ministerial formation, a robust new programme of supervised field education,²⁶ was initiated. This step would

²⁵ Chapman, *Challenge and Achievement*, 32. My addition in brackets.

²⁶ Churches of Christ Theological College, *Opening Ceremony of the Mulgrave Campus*, (Mulgrave, VIC: CCTC, 1989), 1.

begin to more overtly include the language and practice of reflection and formation in how leaders were trained.

The key features of the twenty-plus years between 1989 and 2011, were the ongoing expansion of courses on offer, from Certificates through to Post-Graduate degrees; the rigour and recognition of the awards that were available through significant partnership with the Melbourne College of Divinity (now called the University of Divinity), and the increasing diversity of the student body, with almost equal numbers of men and women studying and a broad range of denominational affiliation represented.²⁷ Despite the ongoing development of course structure and language the central focus of leadership formation at the College was still mainly focussed on preparing people for the practice of local church pastoral ministry. The formation curriculum in the 1990s included two aspects: Worship and Proclamation, which focussed on leading worship and preaching in a contemporary setting; and Mission and Evangelism, which concentrated generally on strategies for church growth.²⁸ During this period of time there began also to emerge specific ministry training areas including: Lay Ministry and Youth Ministry; this trend would continue and diversify over the ensuing years to include other areas such as Children's Ministry, Chaplaincy and Aged Care Internships.

The two specifically historical records of the College that exist, and on which this project draws, are written with particular focus on the structural and organisational aspects of the institution rather than an emphasis on how leaders were trained. There is

²⁷ Chapman, *Challenge and Achievement*, 59.

²⁸ Churches of Christ Theological College, *Opening Ceremony of the Mulgrave Campus*, 5-6.

also an emphasis that runs through the two documents that Christian leadership was primarily about “ministry” and mostly in a pastoral context.²⁹ This idea certainly expanded over the years to include, for example: women in ministry, specific areas of vocational ministry, broad interdenominational regard and collegiality with other higher education institutions, however the locus of Christian leadership remained generally within identifiable pastoral contexts. This is not a criticism, as much as it is an observation about the nature of Christian leadership late in the last millennium.

In the more recent past and looking to the future it is important to acknowledge the changing nature of theological education since the turn of the millennium. At the conclusion of his historical sketch of the College, written in 2007, and as he looks into the future, Chapman writes, “On the one hand we live in an increasingly individualistic, materialistic, post-Christian world, in which churches, rather than making headway, are falling behind. On the other hand, people are looking for deeper answers, and for a foundation to inform and support their efforts at making the world, often their local community, a healthier place.”³⁰ This was a significant signpost for how the College would continue to adapt and consider what the challenges of leadership formation would look like in the coming years.

Stirling Theological College and Leadership Formation Today

In 2011 the board of the College announced a change of name from the Churches of Christ Theological College to Stirling Theological College. The name was selected to

²⁹ Clinton and Bowes, *All to the Glory of God*, 41; Chapman, *Challenge and Achievement*, 62.

³⁰ Ibid., 61.

honour an exemplary past student and faculty member of the College, Gordon Stirling (1914-2010), whose excellence in leadership and ministry and whose thorough integration of faith and life serve as a model of the qualities that Stirling aims to cultivate in its students.³¹ Along with this new name came a new one-line statement of focus and ethos: Forming God's People for Leadership, Mission and Ministry. Immediately the implication is that Christian leadership is not only about mission or ministry but equally and creatively can mean other things too. Today if one was to look at the current College Prospectus³² it would be immediately evident that the notion of "formation" is at the forefront of what the College wants to be known for.

The importance of Stirling's language in adapting to and navigating times of change and complexity should not be underestimated. To put at the forefront of our branding words like "formation," meaning to mould and shape over time, in reference to leadership, speaks powerfully to the nature of how the College continues to develop Christian leadership into the future. Despite the fact that the Church is in sharp decline and Christians in Australia have lost much credibility in recent times in the public arena,³³ there are creative possibilities in articulating a broader understanding of leadership formation, for the world today.

³¹ Stirling Theological College, "History of Stirling College," accessed September 18, 2018, <http://www.stirling.edu.au>.

³² Stirling Theological College, "Prospectus. Partners on the Journey," (Mulgrave, VIC: STC, 2018).

³³ McCrindle Research, *Faith and Belief in Australia*; McCrindle Research, "A Demographic Snapshot of Christianity and Church Attenders in Australia," and also the recent conviction of Cardinal George Pell.

The interpretation of Christian leadership today that is embraced and taught at Stirling, and of which I am a part, is broad and inclusive. Yes, we still train people for local church pastoral ministry, but increasingly we have understood that many people are simply not choosing to pursue a ministry pathway. As a College we have begun to adapt and to reimagine what Christian leadership can look like in a Post-Christian context.

Gordon Stirling summarises the adaptive changes in ethos and focus at the College in his article on Christians in Mission: “Many people who may never ‘come to church’ as ‘church’ exists today, can still frequently experience the real church, that is the people of God, over the back fence, having coffee or a meal at our place, or as we go to them at their point of need.”³⁴ The implication of such an understanding of “church,” and by association Christian leadership, is dynamic and has challenged Stirling to step intentionally into articulating our core mission around shaping the lives of our students towards service in our world. Alan Niven, Stirling Director of Research and Professional Development, recently said, “Our work, or service, when reflected upon theologically and integrated with our faith: changes us; shapes us; sparks our humanity and prompts our humility; teaches us how to love; fills our teaching or conversation with wisdom, and our study of sacred texts with relevance, and inclines us to prayer when our helplessness in the face of human pain overwhelms us.”³⁵ The formation of current and future Christian leaders can and should include both religious and non-religious, paid and volunteer contexts of service, and equip students to not just know a lot about faith, but to

³⁴ Gordon Stirling, “Christians in Mission,” *reo* 25 (2004:1): 15.

³⁵ Alan Niven, “Shaping Life Towards a Work of Service,” *reo* 52 (2017:2): 6-7.

also embody faithful characteristics including: compassion, hope, grace and love to bring about credible, positive change in the world.

Stirling Theological College has a unique and privileged position of being part of the University of Divinity. The University is a collegiate University of Specialisation that signifies an extraordinary model for deep co-operation ecumenically in theological education. Stirling benefits from such a significant partnership, as they are able to offer robust, fully-accredited and internationally recognised courses of study at the highest levels of scholarship.³⁶ However, Stirling is also advantaged to be a participant in the University's broader understanding of what leadership formation stands for today. Peter Sherlock, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Divinity states, "Our vision . . . is to empower our learning community to speak into this ever-changing world, to respond to the changes around us, and to be agents of change, always grounded in the riches of our ancient theological traditions."³⁷ In the broadest sense, the University of which Stirling is a part understands the vital possibilities of Christian leadership to contribute significantly to our world, and this appears to be a priority for the future as well.

One of the core goals identified in the University of Divinity's current strategic plan is to continue to develop the area of Leadership and Identity. The aim of the stated goal is to "bring together educational practitioners, scholars and researchers around the

³⁶ Stirling Theological College, "Home Page."

³⁷ Peter Sherlock, "Welcome to the first issue of *Vox*," *Vox* 1 (April 2015): 1. Sherlock is the Vice Chancellor of the University of Divinity and is here drawing on the core mission statement of the University.

question of religious identity and leadership.”³⁸ This energetic focus provides Stirling with a firm foundation from which to research, develop and shape emerging leaders.

Stirling has always been committed to a healthy balance between academic endeavour and practical engagement. Robust courses of study were always combined with practical engagement in areas such as leadership, homiletics, pastoral care and reflective practice, to name a few, but sometimes, in the past, the broader perception of Stirling was that the institution was more interested in liberal academia than practical ministry and leadership.³⁹ It appears this perception has shifted in more recent years.

Under the leadership of Principal Andrew Menzies, Stirling has developed a more intentional focus on leadership and community engagement in our language and course offerings, as well as forming key partnerships that provide opportunities for rich growth and diversity in what the College can offer. He says, “We are convinced that something lifegiving and hope-filled happens when behaviour, belonging and belief converge. We are committed to helping [students] connect the age-old traditions of Christian learning, reflection, discipleship and formation for service in the world today.”⁴⁰ Some examples of the emerging ethos of Stirling include the development of awards such as: the Graduate Certificate in Leadership, providing ongoing professional leadership development for both church and industry leaders; the Graduate Certificate in Supervision, recognising that professional standards in all caring professions (including

³⁸ University of Divinity, *Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Growing In Partnership*, (Melbourne: University Council, November 25, 2015), 9.

³⁹ Bill Tabbernee, “Gordon Stirling,” accessed March 29, 2019, <http://oldsite.stirling.edu.au/gordon-stirling/>.

⁴⁰ Andrew Menzies, “Partnering on the Journey,” *Stirling Prospectus* (2016): 1.

churches) focus on excellent supervision structures; the Master of Counselling, offered in a key partnership with the Australian Institute of Family Counselling; Catalyst,⁴¹ a one-year diploma course designed for emerging leaders who are passionate about making a difference in society.⁴²

Another notable aspect of Stirling's thinking about leadership development and formation, in present times, is locating it within the context of Christian identity. Christian identity within Churches of Christ is not creedal or doctrinal, much less programmatic. It is always invitational and grounded in the intersection of New Testament proclamation and honest, generous living testimony. The ultimate purpose of Churches of Christ is to disseminate good news in intelligent and embodied ways with grace and peace.⁴³

One of the characteristics of Stirling's commitment to leadership development in Churches of Christ is a passion for creativity and experimentation. The College has adapted over time and will continue to adapt to cultural changes, for example, engaging with newer technologies and online learning, in order to continue to be contemporary in its response to the changing nature of mission and ministry today, but doing so in a way that does not compromise commitment to good practice, robust material and relationships. Stirling is exploring practical ways to engage with the emerging generation

⁴¹ Catalyst will be explored in more detail in this paper inasmuch as the unit of study that is being developed in this doctoral project will be located within the Catalyst Diploma course.

⁴² Catalyst, "Catalyst," accessed September 17, 2018, <http://www.catalyst.edu.au/#about-us>.

⁴³ Adapted from a presentation that I made at the Churches of Christ in Australia forum on Leadership Development and Mission as the representative of Stirling Theological College, Canberra, April 2016.

of leaders, pursuing creative conversations and partnerships for training, and remaining committed to the core brief of what it means to be Churches of Christ in Australia which is to demonstrate the essence of Christian identity with generosity and veracity.

This focus is often accompanied by challenges. In the context of the training and development sector of young adults in Christian leadership, partnership tends to be a rare commodity, with a stronger emphasis on individualised and competitive offerings in multiple contexts. Seminaries, Universities, even churches tend to focus more on creating their own “brand” of training, even if a similar program is being run in close proximity, rather than partnering with another organisation that might be more experienced, established and better resourced. This is an area of ongoing frustration for Stirling as we have sought to model a collaborative approach in course development. The environment, however, is generally competitive, particularly in the state of Victoria, and also within the denominational structure of Churches of Christ.

There is a resource of energy in the collaborative approach articulated in the strategic plan of the University of Divinity, but some disenchantment when it comes to locating a sense of creative imagination and partnership within the structures of Churches of Christ locally. Stirling would strive to be in intentional partnerships, as Menzies and Phelan articulate:

Key participants who share a desire for the expansion of God’s kingdom need to expend vision, energy and faith in what God is up to in our world today and in the future, not what the church used to be. This challenge calls local churches, denominations, church agencies and seminaries together, to work towards a shared future in service of the kingdom of God, rather than existing and aging church structures.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Menzies and Phelan, *Kingdom Communities*, 45.

Finally, there is an important shift in language and understanding that is emerging at Stirling as it attempts to articulate, celebrate and raise the profile of Kingdom Communities⁴⁵ in all kinds of places. These communities are located at the intersections between Gospel (good news) and society at large. This brief historical sketch of Stirling, has highlighted a consistent commitment to adaptation, creativity and the ability to see the vast possibilities of emerging Kingdom communities and Christian leadership for Australia today. On this basis, future leadership formation is focused on asking questions like: What does it mean to be faithful, credible, active participants in the world? Stirling is committed to developing new initiatives that encourage students to embody the way of Jesus practically, to be a sign of hope, grace and love to a watching, and increasingly suspicious world.

⁴⁵ Ibid. This term has become developed by Menzies and Phelan in articulating their understanding of the engagement of Christians and society in this recent Australian publication.

CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS FOR EMERGING LEADERSHIP FORMATION

A New Imagination is Needed

Despite the positive developments in recent years with regard to leadership and formation at Stirling, we are still faced with a number of significant challenges that need to be articulated as a backdrop for the viability of this project, in creating a new course of accredited study in young adult leadership formation. The challenge being addressed in this project is that the current models of leadership-specific training offered by Stirling, are limited and have been generally aimed at producing ministers for churches, or for building leadership competency in various faith-related roles and contexts.¹ However, as Menzies and Phelan point out, “The general problem for seminaries is that by and large, compared to other vocational areas, far fewer people are presenting for a traditional life-long ministry career.”² In 2009, Charles Sherlock indicated that, from the sixty-nine

¹ Menzies and Phelan, *Kingdom Communities*, 46. This is beginning to shift but even a review of current unit offerings at Stirling reveal four leadership-specific units and each, with the exception of one, are focussed on pastoral contexts. More broadly Stirling offers units for competency in areas such as Pastoral Care and generational ministries as examples.

² Ibid.

theological colleges in Australia, only around 20 percent of the 14,000 registered are preparing for formal, church-based ministry.³ Only a small percentage of people are enrolling in theological studies to follow a church-based ministry pathway, and younger people in particular are seeing “ministry” as viable well beyond the church, “They want a more seamless transitional pathway between their faith community and other networks.”⁴ If this has been the primary vehicle for training Christian leaders, as Sherlock indicates, this does not seem to be the only model needed for Stirling, nor for any other ministry training college, in the future.⁵ In many instances over recent years working with young adults the desire to integrate Christian faith meaningfully and credibly with contexts beyond the church has anecdotally been significant in their exploration of vocation and purpose,⁶ as has the ongoing need for a recognised training pathway that can facilitate such an exploration.

Further, and equally significant is the recognition that the “attractional model” of church, where a community markets itself with “attractive” worship events or “outreach” services in order to get people to attend, with its representative evangelistic leadership model, in the words of Farmer, is no longer adequate or sustainable in the Australian context, as is the case in many other places.⁷ Added to this is the already stated broad

³ Charles Sherlock, *Uncovering Theology: The Depth, Reach and Utility Of Australian Theological Education* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2009), 111-112.

⁴ Menzies and Phelan, *Kingdom Communities*, 47.

⁵ Ibid., 46-47; Sherlock, “Why Australia Needs Theology,” 14.

⁶ This theme has emerged in my work with young adults aged between 17-28 years over many years in local church congregations, denominational networks and teaching.

⁷ Keith Farmer, “The Future of the Church in Australia,” Willow Creek Australia, July 7, 2015, <https://willowcreek.org.au/the-future-of-the-church-in-australia/>, 3; see also McCrindle Research, *Faith and*

decline in church attendance across denominations and traditions accompanied by a steady decline in the perception of Ministers of Religion as people to be trusted and respected. Roy Morgan, specializing in market research and analysis, indicates that Ministers or clergy have hit record low ratings for ethics and honesty in the most recent survey, see Figure 1.1 as below.

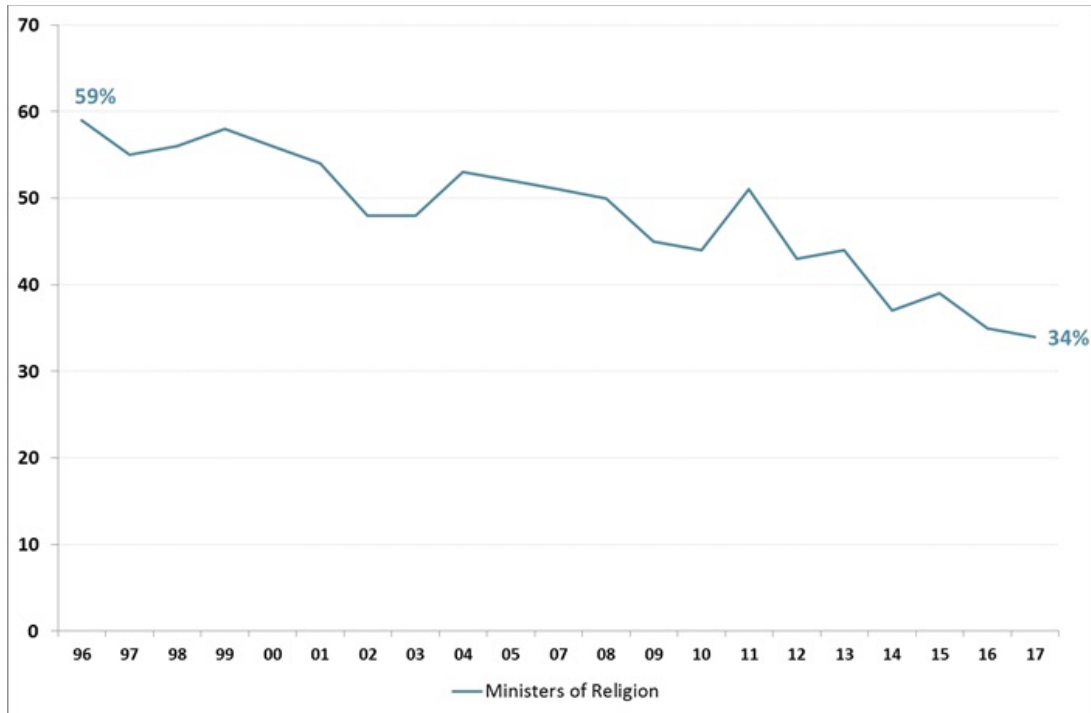


Figure 1.1 Image of Profession Survey 2017

Source: “Roy Morgan Image of Profession Survey 2017,” Roy Morgan, June 7, 2017, <http://www.roymorgan.com/findings/7244-roy-morgan-image-of-professions-may-2017-201706051543>.

Christian leadership can creatively be redefined for the future of the Kingdom of God in Australia, but this presents significant challenges when denominational structures and churches are entrenched in traditional language and models. Alan Roxburgh says,

Belief in Australia, “A Demographic Snapshot of Christianity and Church Attenders in Australia,” McCrindle.

“we consistently make the church the subject and object of practically all our attention and energy.”⁸ Les Ball makes clear that “the need to deliver theological education in ways that are relevant to [a] wider range of careers is emerging strongly.”⁹ These are clear affirmations about the need to shift traditional language and imagination and invite people, congregants and college students alike, beyond simply the local church as the context for their leadership and into “joining the way of Jesus”¹⁰ in the everyday contexts of work, neighbourhood, sporting club and school. In addition there is a need to emphasise sensitivity and wisdom in grappling with what it means to exercise Christian leadership if the end point is not attractional or evangelistic.

Christian Leadership in Light of Current Public Perceptions

In Australia the place of a credible Christian influence or voice is limited at best. Faith or belief is generally perceived as a “privatised” affair with ample opportunity to speak about, but little authority to meaningfully influence public policy, economics, education and humanitarian concerns. Recent McCrindle research into faith and belief in Australia highlighted a clear problem for Christian leaders when high numbers of respondents, 73 percent, reported that they are: “negatively influenced by the actions and behaviours of Christians in society.”¹¹ Added to this, respondents report that the biggest stumbling block to engaging with Christian faith is the Church’s stance on

⁸ Alan Roxburgh, *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World*, (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2015), ix.

⁹ Ball, *Transforming Theology*, 53.

¹⁰ Ibid., xiii.

¹¹ McCrindle, *Faith and Belief in Australia*, 2017, 10.

homosexuality.¹² What appears to be a broad perception about clear hypocrisy, as well as a lack of inclusivity and acceptance are particularly pertinent in light of recent cultural complexities in our nation, such as the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse,¹³ increasing focus on religious fundamentalism and radicalisation, the debate and plebiscite on Same Sex Marriage in late 2017,¹⁴ and media reporting on domestic violence in the Church¹⁵ to name just a few.

Christians have appeared to be judgemental, superior, close-minded, combative, lacking in unity, destructive, manipulative, hypocritical, unloving, unintelligent and irrelevant in many of the cases listed above.¹⁶ Christians, by and large, have not done a good job of embodying the “good news”/ Gospel of the Kingdom of love to a watching Australia. Many of the current perceptions about Christians are justified, although I suspect the media enjoys less balance and more demonising in reporting. I am encouraged by the University of Divinity’s response to the findings in the Royal Commission, which calls for immediate action and change in partnership with Australian

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Commonwealth of Australia, “Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse,” 2017, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au>.

¹⁴ Paul Karp, “Australia Says Yes to Same-Sex Marriage in Historic Postal Survey,” *The Guardian*, November 15, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/nov/15/australia-says-yes-to-same-sex-marriage-in-historic-postal-survey>.

¹⁵ Julia Baird, “Domestic Violence in the Church. When Women are Believed, Change Will Happen,” *ABC*, May 23, 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-23/when-women-are-believed-the-church-will-change/9782184>.

¹⁶ Sherlock, “Why Australia Needs Theology,” McCrindle, *Faith and Belief in Australia*, 2017, 10, 30, 34; Paula Glassborow, “Unconscious Incompetence,” *Common Grace*, accessed September 13, 2019, https://www.commongrace.org.au/unconscious_incompetence_domestic_violence_and_the_church; Kathleen McPhillips, “The Catholic Church is Headed For Another Sex Abuse Scandal as #NunsToo Speak Up,” *The Conversation*, February 15, 2019, <https://theconversation.com/the-catholic-church-is-headed-for-another-sex-abuse-scandal-as-nunstoo-speak-up-111539>.

churches, including the rejection of clericalism, increased transparency, accountability and inclusivity.¹⁷ However there is much more work to be done to restore a sense in which Christianity, let alone Christian leadership, can own a measure of public credibility into the future.

Julia Baird, a highly-regarded journalist, historian and author who has been at the forefront of exposing and reporting areas of domestic abuse within the Church gave the University of Divinity graduation address earlier this year and observed, “how many missed opportunities there are for Christians to engage in the public sphere. To walk into a fray, unarmed, open, loving, concerned, keen to right wrongs and to hear.”¹⁸ Instead of embracing such a posture, Christians generally are more inclined to ramp up defensiveness, close ranks and argue doctrinally. Baird goes onto to suggest that a more humble and teachable stance is what is required today, “One of the most profoundly counter-cultural things people can do, and that spiritual leaders can do is to listen.”¹⁹

The Appearance of Ineptitude and Self-interest in National Leadership

The most high-profile leaders of government in our country today are predominantly viewed as lacking in veracity and character. As the Roy Morgan findings indicate politicians rank well into the bottom third for honesty and ethics (see Figure 1.1). Recently, in the past decade, the stability and credibility of our nation’s leaders has been

¹⁷ Health and Integrity Conference Media Release, “Conference Calls for a ‘Reformation’ of Australia’s churches,” August 31, 2018, <https://divinity.edu.au/blog/2018/08/31/conference-calls-for-a-reformation-of-australias-churches/>.

¹⁸ Julia Baird, “Vigilantes of Grace,” University of Divinity, Graduation Address, March 16, 2018, <https://www.divinity.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-03-16-Graduation-Address-Julia-Baird.pdf>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

questionable at best. Once again, as of August 24, 2018, our Prime Minister has been replaced after a leadership challenge within the leading political party. The embarrassing reality for Australia is that despite our apparent democratic election process, we have had six Prime Ministers in the past eleven years.²⁰ Australian politics is considered a laughing stock internationally,²¹ and many people also view the current national leadership as largely self-interested.²²

There is a “humanitarian emergency” on Nauru where children are being held in detention despite persistent cries from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and leading law consultants, to intervene;²³ there is an ongoing need to elevate our national response to climate change and renewable energy; and there are significant economic issues including cost of living, unemployment and the growing gap between the rich and poor, to mention just a handful;²⁴ and yet our leaders more often present an entitled, squabbling and self-interested front, rather than embodying transformative leadership. Of

²⁰ Sarah Kimmorley, “Australia Has Now Had Seven Prime Ministers in just 10 Years - Here's Who They Are and How Long They Were in Office,” *Business Insider Australia*, August 24, 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/list-of-australian-prime-ministers-2018-8>; Michelle Rimmer and Tara Costello, “Six PMs in 10 years: How this Leadership Spill was Different,” *SBS*, August 24, 2018, <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/six-pms-in-10-years-how-this-leadership-spill-was-different>.

²¹ Former Foreign Minister Julie Bishop in her interview with 60 minutes. Sixty Minutes, “Julie Bishop Blasts ‘Schoolchildren’ Colleagues and says Australia is the Laughing Stock of the World,” September 23, 2018, <https://www.news.com.au/finance/work/leaders/julie-bishop-blasts-schoolchildren-colleagues-in-explosive-60-minutes-interview/news-story/35de6aa496ab649789f96142d3e07ea7>

²² The Age, “Government and Leadership: Politicians: Australia first, not your egos,” August 23, 2018, <https://www.theage.com.au/national/government-and-leaders...liticians-australia-first-not-your-egos-20180822-h14an4.html>.

²³ Kathrine Murphy, “Morrison is a Leader in a Hurry – but not to end the disgrace of Nauru,” *The Guardian*, September 22, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/sep/22/morrison-is-a-leader-in-a-hurry-but-not-to-end-the-disgrace-of-nauru>.

²⁴ Roy Morgan, “Economic Issues Dominate Australians’ Problems in 2018,” *Roy Morgan*, March 6, 2018, Finding No. 7504, <http://www.roymorgan.com/findings/7504-most-important-problems-australia-the-world-february-2018-201803051043>.

course not all people in public leadership are inept and self-interested, but the media portrayal, combined with a government dogged by disunity and the poor behaviour displayed in contexts such as “question time” does little to inspire an emerging generation to value and embrace leadership. Such pervasive perceptions of public office offer a skewed model of leadership, and contribute to the challenge of encouraging the emerging generation of young people to step purposefully into leadership.

Generational Challenges and Leadership Formation

In designing a leadership formation program for young adults today it is important to address the challenges arising from various dominant cultural factors. When the major problem being addressed by this project is the lack of imagination and integrated training for young Christian leaders, beyond ecclesial contexts, it is not enough to simply address training structures and practices and leadership perceptions. There must also be a realistic consideration of the characteristics of young Australians today and the cultural influences that make leadership formation more challenging today for young people. The emerging generation of young people in Australia are unique in a number of general characteristics that are important to articulate in considering what form their leadership in general, and as Christians more specifically, might take in the future.

The evidence that Generation Y/ Millennials, and the soon to emerge Generation Z are all that much different to previous generations of teenagers with above average means and education is unconvincing.²⁵ Described as narcissistic, entitled, lazy, lacking

²⁵ Joel Stein, “Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation,” *Time*, May 20, 2013, <http://time.com/247/millennials-the-me-me-me-generation/>.

loyalty, commitment and attention span,²⁶ this generation is largely a result of adapting to the world into which they have been born that thrives on globalised technology and information obesity, and as a result does have some unique complexities that are important to articulate as challenges in Christian leadership formation.

A Culture of Instant Gratification

In a world where the average person can use a small hand-held device to order food, watch episodes of *The Bachelor*, book an international flight, make a mortgage repayment, watch the latest breaking news from the other side of the globe, find out the meaning of the word logophile, research your homework on the French Revolution and upload six selfies of face in various bored poses, it is no wonder that the emerging generation of young people are impatient. As one Millennial confesses, “On demand services like Google, Amazon, Netflix, Uber, Deliveroo don’t add to our patience either. We expect instant gratification, instant answers and instant services.”²⁷ This pervasive sense of instant gratification presents significant challenges to the notion of leadership formation. Formation is a process that takes time and patience.²⁸ Young people could jump online and research “Christian leadership,” learn some principles of effective leadership, but to be formed is an invitation to discipline, journey, experimentation and to take some time for learning and adapting and shaping.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Tanya Korobka, “The Ultimate List of Millennial Characteristics,” *Lucky Attitude*, May 11, 2018, <https://luckyattitude.co.uk/millennial-characteristics/>.

²⁸ “Formation,” Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/formation>.

Not only does a sense of instant gratification impact the idea of formation, it also impacts the notion of resilience. Many young adults today have been raised in an environment of indulgence and a flattened model of effort and reward, where everyone gets a ribbon for running the race, even if you are hopeless at running, or where everyone is a “superhero,” which is just another way of saying no-one is.²⁹ The result is a generation of young people who are not adept at dealing with frustration, or failure and as a consequence struggle to maintain a sense of resilience when life inevitably gets tough. Any healthy leadership will face difficulties and resistance over time, but will emerging leaders have the “ability not to be fazed by setbacks; to roll with the punches and persevere in the face of difficulties?”³⁰ Today it is a constant challenge to help young adults hone “the discipline to say no to the sugar hit of instant gratification, to achieve the far richer rewards that accrue to those prepared to invest the time and effort . . . ideation and innovation requires time and space as well as trial and error.”³¹

The Impact of Social Networking

There are so many amazing and advantageous advancements in technology and media to embrace and utilise in life-giving ways, but there are also some complexities that are worth addressing when it comes to the potentially negative impacts of social media on emerging leaders. In a world saturated by media and social networking young

²⁹ Brad Bird, director, *The Incredibles*, Burbank CA: Disney/Pixar, 2004.

³⁰ Dan Kindlon, *Too much of a good thing: Raising children of character in an indulgent age*, (New York: Miramax Books, 2001), 59-60.

³¹ David Hill, “Lessons in resilience for millennials”, *Deloitte*, January 31, 2018, <http://blog.deloitte.com.au/lessons-resilience-millennials/>.

people today are apparently more “connected” than ever before. This model of connection, however, brings with it certain challenges including: competitive social pressure, projected identity and relational superficiality.

The average Australian young person today is estimated to spend almost six hours (340 minutes) on social media every week, with females between the ages of 14 to 24 years of age almost doubling this.³² Whilst there is nothing inherently wrong with such a dedicated use of time, the exposure to all kinds of images, videos, trending stories and information makes the world of a young person increasingly competitive and comparative in contrast to a generation ago. In the teenage and young adult years of the 1980s the context for media engagement was three or four channels on a tiny television with limited viewing time allowed. The kids in the local neighbourhood and school were the focus of any attempt to be cool, fashionable, attractive or “fit in.” Today young people have to compare and compete seemingly with the whole world.

One of the results of this unique social context is increased anxiety. Research tells us that “Generation Y are increasingly worried by an array of factors from youth unemployment rates and increasing housing costs, to body image and crime rates.”³³ A fascinating study conducted by the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) in 2017 surveyed 47,000 young Australians and discovered that the biggest cause of worry for both boys and girls was about their futures, a close second was anxiety about body image, see Figure 1.2 as below.

³² Matthew Elmas, “How Much Time do Australians Spend on Social Media?” Internet Retailing, May 15, 2018, <https://internetretailing.com.au/time-australians-spend-social-media/>.

³³ Mark McCrindle, “Understanding Generation Y,” *The Australian Leadership Foundation*, http://www.communicationcache.com/uploads/1/0/8/8/10887248/understanding_generation_y.pdf.

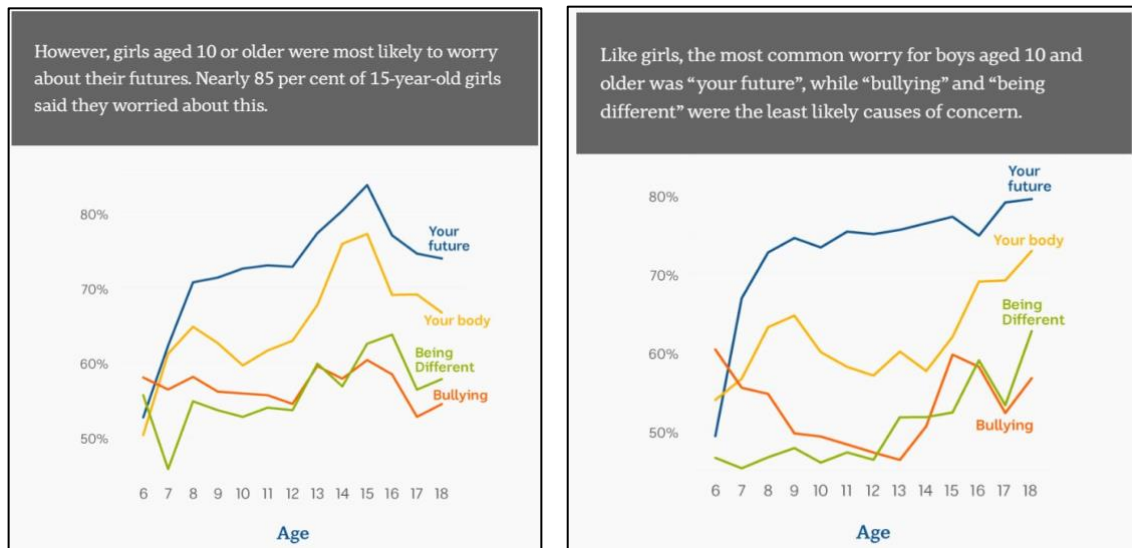


Figure 1.2 “The Worrying Trend in the Minds of Young Australians”

Source: Mark Doman, Inga Ting, Ri Liu and Alex Palmer, “The Worrying Trend in the Minds of Young Australians,” *ABC*, October 10, 2017, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-10-10/the-worrying-trend-in-the-minds-of-young-australians/9013954>.

Another by-product of the social networking phenomena is the temptation to contrive one’s personal portrayed identity. There is a deep desire in all humans to be seen and approved of, but in light of a heightened sense of anxiety, a broader competitive context and the one-sided nature of many social media platforms, individuals can create an online image of themselves that bears little resemblance to who they really are. The strange and seductive environment of “likes,” “shares,” “retweets” and going “viral” is fertile ground in which to create a false sense of identity in order to feel significant in an increasingly disconcerting world.

In recent years the relationship between identity and leadership has begun to be explored intentionally.³⁴ Simon Walker in his books on *Undefended Leadership* says,

³⁴ For example, Alicia Fedelina Chavez and Ronni Sanlo, eds., *Identity and Leadership: Informing Our Lives, Informing Our Practice*, (Washington, DC: NASPA, 2012); Arbing Institute, *Leadership and*

“The secret of effective leadership is the freedom to live an undefended life.”³⁵ Walker’s image of being undefended is almost completely bound up in the idea of personal identity as he goes on to explain,

Freedom comes from knowing that you are approved of. Freedom to perform comes from the knowledge that there is someone rooting for you in the audience, whose opinion you value more than anyone else’s and who is smiling and cheering just for you. In such a relationship you become free from the need to succeed. Indeed you can perform [lead] with nothing to lose, because you are secure that your identity, your future, your wellbeing does not depend on the quality of your performance.³⁶

Considering this obvious connection between effective leadership and personal identity, not to mention future purpose, it is difficult not to see the challenges for a young generation, saturated in social media, trying to find a deep sense of personal identity that is not reliant on how many selfies you take, how successful your life appears to be or how many likes you receive on your posts.

The final aspect of social media impact to explore is relational. Despite the appearance of extensive connection, social media is contributing to a decrease in interpersonal relating and communicating. It is estimated that approximately 93 percent of communication is nonverbal,³⁷ “the use of electronic communication has overtaken face-to-face and voice-to-voice communication by a wide margin.”³⁸ However, just

Self-Deception. Getting Out of the Box. Third Edition, (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., 2018).

³⁵ Walker, *The Undefended Leader*, 103.

³⁶ Ibid., 102. My addition in brackets.

³⁷ Susan Tardanico, “Is Social Media Sabotaging Real Communication?” *Forbes*, April 30, 2012, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/susantardanico/2012/04/30/is-social-media-sabotaging-real-communication/#5108a0372b62>.

³⁸ Ibid.

because we have emailed, texted or tweeted does not mean we have necessarily “truly” communicated. When relating becomes remote, and we do not have to look people in the eyes when we speak or listen, we miss out on experiencing visceral reactions and responses and we begin to numb our sense of intuition, find it difficult to read emotion, find it easy to be brutal and disparaging, and avoid being in places of vulnerability. Each of these skills are vital in relationship building and developing trust and rapport, which are in turn essential qualities of healthy leadership.

While Claire Madden, Australia’s foremost social researcher on generational engagement suggests that “relationships are of the highest importance for Gen Z,”³⁹ there are clear challenges ahead for emerging leaders when relationship building and communication can apparently be “fast-tracked.” Kasmin Cooney illustrates this well in describing her client’s concerns about the emerging generation: “It is not just the fact that they don’t like to communicate and reach out verbally; many just don’t see the value of it, again, missing the point that engaging with people and building relationships is an essential part of life, not just work.”⁴⁰ This is a clear area of challenge in working meaningfully with emerging leaders today.

This chapter has demonstrated that although the emerging generations, with all their education, connectedness and adaptability, have enormous potential to become change-makers, innovators and leaders, there are many cultural and social factors that can be considered significant challenges. Traditional models of ministry training offered by

³⁹ Claire Madden, “Hello Gen Z: Three Leadership Foundations,” February 13, 2018, <https://clairemadden.com/hello-gen-z-three-leadership-foundations/>.

⁴⁰ Kasmin Cooney “Future of Work : Are we ready for Generation Z?” *Leader Values*, 2013 <https://www.leader-values.com/article.php?aid=761>.

seminaries generally, but Stirling specifically, the limitations of language and imagination for Christian leadership beyond ecclesial structures, the broader perceptions of Christian faith and public leadership in everyday Australia, and the unique cultural context of the emerging generation are all challenges that need to be addressed and transformed into the future. Stirling, as the context for this doctoral project, is well-placed in an educational and ecumenical context within the University of Divinity to begin to address these challenges in developing new areas of research and study for young students aspiring to leadership, as well as speaking powerfully into local churches and mission organisations to offer a new imagination for the future of Christian leadership in Australia.

PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review a variety of literature that is relevant to developing leadership training for an emerging generation with a focus on three specific aspects of leadership. The first two books will help to identify the essential relationship between leadership and character and the impact of that relationship on credible Christian leadership. The next two will explore the nature of leadership development as Spiritual formation and will present a case for emerging leadership training to be grounded in the notion of integrated formation. Finally, the last two reviews will focus upon the future of Christian leadership, taking into account the unique characteristics and implications of emerging sociological generations as well as the local context in Australia today.

Character and Leadership

The Road to Character – David Brooks

In this book David Brooks explores the idea of personal character by relating the stories of various key historical figures who, in different ways, each embody some of the core attributes of leadership character. The thesis of *The Road to Character* is that in order for a person to achieve a life of rewarding purpose and true meaning they must

learn a more simple, self-restrained and humble view of themselves, as often exemplified in the stories of those included in the book. The theme that is threaded throughout the whole text is Brooks' adaptation of an observation from author Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, that there are two opposing aspects of human nature. On one hand there is "Adam I," the "external resume,"¹ or the ambitious and task-oriented aspect of our humanity. On the other hand there is "Adam II" the side of human nature that, "wants to embody certain moral qualities,"² or the internal part of ourselves.

Brooks argues throughout both his social commentary as well as his storytelling that despite the pattern of the world at large, which is predominantly modelled on nurturing Adam I, the path to true character and ultimate fulfilment is in celebrating and nurturing Adam II. In discovering the power of humility, self-restraint, sacrifice and service, we serendipitously also find resilience, deep meaning, joy, wisdom and maturity.³ In each of the stories that are told about people from history there is a common theme that emerges, "They had to go down to come up. They had to descend into the valley of humility to climb to the heights of character."⁴

Both male and female, famous and somewhat maligned, well-known and obscure, Brooks masterfully relates the stories of some of history's most influential characters. Each of them embodies a unique aspect that Brooks outlines as essential to character formation. In the examples of Francis Perkins and Dwight Eisenhower, there is a clear

¹ David Brooks, *The Road to Character*, (Great Britain: Penguin, Random House, 2015), x.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 261-267.

⁴ Ibid., 13.

focus on the mastery of self. Self-discipline and self-conquest were seen in a past era as characteristics to be aspired to, and were often most shaped in times of struggle and complexity. Dorothy Day's story is one that embodies not only struggle but a level of self-criticism that quested for a higher nature that was evident in her life-long striving toward social justice and deep faith. The theme of dignity is unpacked in the stories of perhaps lesser known, but still incredibly important characters in the civil rights movement in America. The theme of love is captured in the story of George Eliot the prolific writer and poet who laboured for a sense of approval and affection and became celebrated for not only her masterful writing but her character maturation as she grew "out of self-centredness into generous sympathy,"⁵ and deep responsibility for tolerance as a result. The brief sketch of Augustine's life and character development build on the theme of love as he famously used to say "you become what you love."⁶ Augustine understood that love was not only about a personal feeling, but about what impels us to action in the world.

Brooks does a superb job of combining good story telling with deep wisdom and teaching. In his reflections on historic characters and older times he brings into sharp focus some of the imbalance of the current cultural circumstances today. In an age of selfies and i-focussed technology, where self-promotion and aggrandizement are as easy as the click of a button and a sense of approval is centred on the rather dubious basis of social media "likes," Brooks calls us to consider a return to an older school of thinking,

⁵ Ibid.,185.

⁶ Ibid., 207.

“the crooked-timber school.”⁷ This world-view is one that understands human brokenness and highlights humility in the face of personal weaknesses and limitation. Brooks says that, in the ongoing task of facing up to who we are and how we are responding to our own complexity, our character is built.

As the focus of this doctoral project deals predominantly with reimagining Christian leadership for an emerging generation of young people who are seeking to be change-makers in the world today, this is an important and formative text. It avoids a romantic, and simplistic sense of “things were better back when,” or “back in the good old days.” Instead Brooks is realistic about the limitations of past eras, as well as the gifts and wonders of more modern times. Importantly he points clearly to the fact that various circumstances, including the shifting tides of war and peace, sociological generational characteristics as well as accessible globalised technology, have contributed to an imbalance in who we are. All people do actually need a sense of external achievement, which sadly is often the only measure for “successful” leadership, but also, and more importantly, there is need for a deeper moral vocabulary, and “methodology for the formation of [our] souls.”⁸ In an age of self-esteem pressing for a Humility Code⁹ is a decisive path to discovering a fulfilling sense of purpose, a realistic perspective of self, a deep sense of personal identity, a motivation for humble service and the ability to be deeply tolerant and empathetic towards compassion and acceptance. Each of these attributes contributes to vital, sustainable leadership. Whilst not overtly about leadership

⁷ Ibid., xii, 261

⁸ Ibid., 245.

⁹ Ibid., 261-267.

this text is riddled with poignant reflections that point the reader to many of the most essential elements necessary for not only sustainable leadership, but a faithful and robust engagement with the world that has credibility. The various characters that Brooks refers to are all leaders with something to teach an emerging generation of aspiring leaders.

After You Believe. Why Christian Character Matters – N.T. Wright

In traditional practice and understanding of an individual coming to know the hope of salvation there has often been a perception that salvation is a moment. One makes a declaration of faith, perhaps ritualises that declaration in some formal way, for example baptism, and then proceeds to go about living life as a “Christian.” The emphasis of evangelical mission and leadership has been on guiding people to that decisive moment, with less focus and teaching about how to live once one has decided that Jesus is their Saviour. Wright addresses this dynamic as he begins his book by saying that many Christians “have a big gap in their vision of what being a Christian is all about.”¹⁰

Wright's contention in this book is that the Bible, particularly the New Testament, invites people into a deeply transformative way of life that, “will both inform our moral judgment and form our characters so that we can live by their guidance.”¹¹ The word Wright uses for this notion of character formation is virtue or, “what happens when wise and courageous choices have become ‘second nature’.”¹² Wright builds a case for

¹⁰ N.T. Wright, *After You Believe. Why Christian Character Matters*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2010), 3.

¹¹ Ibid., 18.

¹² Ibid., 21.

Christians to embrace intentionally a life of formation through the disciplined practice of virtue in everyday life.

One of the most significant contributions of Wright's text is his observation that much of life today appears to be about what we do or do not do, rather than who we are becoming. When the Christian lived experience is reduced to either a list of rules, duties or obligations that one needs to conform to or, on the other hand a more spontaneous sense in which one simply follows their heart, Wright suggests we miss out on the fullness of becoming who we are actually meant to be as beings created in God's image. There is another way, and Wright calls it the transformation of character, as modelled by Jesus.

Wright repetitively makes statements about the "aim of the Christian life" throughout the first chapters of the book for example, "The aim of the Christian life in the present time . . . is the life of a fully formed, fully flourishing Christian character."¹³ One can read this stated aim as potentially quite self-focussed. When one's sole aim is to be "virtuous" it seems to challenge those in society who like to live humbly for other people more overtly. In further reading it is clear that Wright's vision of virtuous character, of course, is far from self-glorifying. He compares Aristotle's threefold pattern of character formation or aspiration toward embodying virtue to the ways of Jesus. Whilst Aristotle's view was that the development of character was to glorify the individual, the goal of Christian character formation which embraces the daily, disciplined practice of virtue to shape personal character ultimately serves to reflect the glory of God and God's creation:

¹³ Ibid., 32.

others.¹⁴ As expected, Wright develops his thesis by exhorting Christians to deep spiritual discipline and practice, and these practices lead to the embodiment of God's kingdom in practical and life-giving ways. "We are called to be genuine, image bearing, God-reflecting human beings. That works out in a million ways, not least in a passion for justice and an eagerness to create and celebrate beauty."¹⁵

Incorporating a vision of God's kingdom and the roles to which Christians are called within that kingdom, Wright expresses a broad biblical context for his understanding of character formation. Consistently inviting people to be orienting their beliefs and actions around the character of Christ, there begins to emerge a vision of Christian leadership that is not about "learning how to throw your weight about, how to be bossy and tyrannical,"¹⁶ but instead is the humble way of love, faith and hope. Wright ultimately interprets Paul's teaching on the fruit of the spirit (Gal 5:22-23) as the result of a life that is committed to being character formed through the practice of the virtues found in 1 Corinthians 13, for example, rather than something that just happens automatically because we believe or have received the spirit. No one sits back and hopes fruit will just arrive because one bought an apple tree.¹⁷

This is a central and formative text to this doctoral project in regard to leadership formation. Wright articulates the profound need for engaged people of faith to be deepening character through practice and discipline in order to show a credible, gracious,

¹⁴ Ibid., 67.

¹⁵ Ibid., 71.

¹⁶ Ibid., 91.

¹⁷ Ibid., 195.

loving and saving image of God to the world. As he summarises, “to give wise leadership in our wider society in the confusing and dangerous times we live, we urgently need people whose characters have been formed . . . We’ve had enough of pragmatists and self-seeking risk-takers. We need people of character.”¹⁸

There is a clear link between the formation of character and the health of leaders today. In light of the pattern of the world, oriented around achievement, status and power, Wright and Brooks both call readers to a different path. Each author hones in on a pattern of purposeful service towards public engagement, “the challenge we face is to grow and develop a fresh generation of leaders in all walks of life, whose character has been formed in wisdom and public service, not in greed for money and power.”¹⁹

Leadership and Spiritual Formation

In The Name of Jesus. Reflections on Christian Leadership – Henri Nouwen

Considering the scope of Henri Nouwen’s life and work, it seems somewhat audacious to say that this would be one of his best books, however the significance of this text to the area of leadership formation cannot be overstated. Nouwen, in this short yet profound book, addresses three of the most powerful temptations for leaders today against the backdrop of the biblical story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness (Mt 4:1-11). The three words are: relevance, popularity and power. It would be difficult to come up with three words that more accurately describe the broad aspirations of current

¹⁸ Ibid., 25.

¹⁹ Ibid., 26.

popular culture. I would also insist that these three words have some significance for just about every young person today as they wrestle with the dynamics of identity, self-esteem, social impact and deep meaning as they grow up, make decisions and relate to others in the context of the collective media-driven world in which they live.

Drawing from his experiences moving from Harvard to live in community with the mentally handicapped at L'Arche, Nouwen describes his own personal journey into a deeper understanding of the nature of Christian leadership and offers readers some powerful signposts for the future of Christian leadership today. The first thing that struck me when reading this book was that proficiency in personal self-awareness is a core characteristic of a healthy, growing leader. Nouwen, in his introduction, before he even begins to outline the more tangible formative experiences of living in the L'Arche community that led to this book, gives a significant insight into the character of reflective Christian leadership. His ability to tune in to his own insecurities and complexities as he faced life transition, and to ask serious and confronting questions of himself was challenging. "Everyone was saying I was doing really well, but something inside was telling me that my success was putting my own soul in danger. I began to ask myself whether my lack of contemplative prayer, my loneliness and my constantly changing involvement in what seemed most urgent were signs that the Spirit was gradually being suppressed."²⁰ Nouwen appears to be describing many leaders today in particular seasons of the leadership journey, and in my work with all kinds of leaders, I have heard similar echoes of self-doubt and deep questioning many times. This insightful introduction to

²⁰ Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus. Reflections on Christian Leadership*, (New York: Cross Roads Publishing Company, 1989), 20.

Nouwen's story immediately highlights the importance of a leader's ability to develop aptitude in self-awareness and reflection, toward transformation.

Nouwen unpacks what he describes as three specific temptations of leadership throughout the rest of the text, beginning with the desire for relevance. Particularly in the sphere of Christian leadership today, there is a common theme articulated around the need to be "relevant" in both thought and method. In an effort to bring the ancient story and practice of Christian faith into modern times, there has many times been an emphasis on relevance. One must use relevant language as opposed to archaic words and phrases; embrace relevant worship styles and music as opposed to old fashioned hymns with complex lyrics and tonality; facilitate relevant programs as opposed to "boring old" prayer meetings and Bible study. Nouwen, with some dexterity dismantles the perceived need to be "relevant" by reflecting deeply on the nature of what drives our need for relevance. Having located a deep sense of significance and meaning in his abilities to impress people with his books and his distinguished career at leading universities, Nouwen was suddenly faced with the reality that his identity and sense of belonging and acceptance were not remotely related to his many accomplishments of which the community at L'Arche knew nothing. He describes it as one of the most profound experiences of his life,

Because it forced me to rediscover my true identity. These broken, wounded and completely unpretentious people forced me to let go of my relevant self – the self that can do things, show things, prove things, build things – and forced me to reclaim the that unadorned self in which I am completely vulnerable, open to receive and give love regardless of any accomplishments.²¹

²¹ Ibid., 28.

The emerging generation of young adults live in a world where self-promotion and popularity, both closely related to the notion of relevance, drive most digital communication and social interaction today. Nouwen reminds readers that the great and glorious message of hope that Christian leaders carry today is that, “God loves us not because of what we do or accomplish.”²² We are Gods redeemed, beloved creation, and it is here we can find our truest sense of identity.

Closely related to the temptation to be relevant, Nouwen says is the temptation to be spectacular, which he describes as one’s personal desire to function individually as opposed to communally.²³ The tendency in Christian leadership towards individualism has traditionally been prevalent as individual leaders took pride in an ability to perform, endure, draw crowds, compel responses and create experiences. Nouwen reminds readers that this is not the way of Jesus.

Finally, perhaps the most seductive temptation of leadership is power. Acknowledging that all leaders have power, the question of how one uses it becomes enormously significant, when every day the news is peppered with reports of the significant mis-use of power. Nouwen reflects on the nature of power and control as he suggests that, “power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people,”²⁴ but again the

²² Ibid., 30.

²³ Ibid., 51-52.

²⁴ Ibid., 77.

way of Jesus is not about power and control, it is about powerlessness and humility where the choice for love always eclipses the choice for power.²⁵

In each of the listed temptations, Nouwen presses readers back into the story of Jesus as our model for leadership. In response to our temptation to be relevant he encourages prayerfulness as intentional and formative discipline, the humble and vulnerable place of engagement with God, and deep listening for wisdom out of which to engage the complexities of the world we face. In response to the desire to be spectacular and individualistic, Nouwen encourages practices of confession and forgiveness; and in response to the temptation of power, Nouwen urges rigorous theological reflection which humbly relinquishes human control in favour of Gods gentle guidance.²⁶

The contribution of Nouwen's reflections in this book to leadership formation is obvious. In a world that has often celebrated ability, achievement, power and control as core characteristics of leadership, Nouwen would encourage readers to focus on Jesus as the quintessential image of a leader. Christ who was formed, on his journey toward the cross, in prayerfulness, vulnerability and trust offers us a model of leadership that is centred on the process of formation in contrast to the instantaneous, approval seeking, spectacular and highly-individualistic world we live in.

The Undefended Leader – Simon Walker

Walker offers readers an exceptional resource in this trilogy of books, grouped together under the heading *The Undefended Leader*. Three short but clear books on

²⁵ Ibid., 82.

²⁶ Ibid., 87-88.

leadership make up this volume: Leading out of Who You Are; Leading with Nothing to Lose; and Leading with Everything to Give. Together each individual book builds toward the central proposition that, “The secret of effective leadership is the freedom to live an undefended life.”²⁷

Walker describes the kind of characteristics that contribute to making an individual undefended in the first part of book one. Drawing on some obvious historical examples such as Nelson Mandela and Winston Churchill among others, Walker postulates that, “Leaders, it seems, are formed, not simply appointed. This process of formation is not one that is merely passive, or merely active: it is both.”²⁸ He describes this formation as the ability of the individual to wrestle with themselves, face their inner demons and struggle actively with their own sense of hunger for things like power and control. This emphasis on formation leads to freedom, or being undefended as Walker summarises, “public, political battles are mere re-enactments of the campaign they have fought and won inside themselves . . . They are free, free of the need to dominate, to conquer, to oppress, to consume, to acquire . . . because they are free within themselves.”²⁹

One of the significant issues Walker highlights is that most people, but leaders in particular experience the complexities of idealization, idealism and unmet emotional needs.³⁰ According to Walker these factors contribute significantly to leaders seeking for

²⁷ Walker, *The Undefended Leader*, 103.

²⁸ Ibid., 13.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 19-23.

things such as success, approval, desire for results, popularity, applause or whatever drives deeper human desires. Walker would suggest that when driven by these factors, leaders are not free.

The majority of book one explores the various influences that result in people being defensive in their leadership, and significant time is given to describing the various egos formed in one's early years and how they impact leadership. Walker names them the Shaping, Defining, Adapting and Defending "Leadership Egos." These chapters can be read as very prescriptive in isolation, but read in the broader context of the book it is important to acknowledge patterns that influence from an early age, for better or worse, and acknowledge too that these can determine one's needs as well as drive the desire to meet those needs, and how despite this, individuals can continue to be shaped and formed in a deeper sense of identity toward freedom as we mature.

In chapter three Walker employs his principal metaphor to describe how leaders defend themselves, imagining leadership as a front stage and back stage performance. This metaphor implies that we choose to, "either reveal or conceal aspects of our selves, to manage audiences we see as potentially threatening."³¹ Finally Walker suggests that in light of the many aspects of life and work that push leaders to be defensive, being in place of freedom and embodying undefended leadership depends on the ability to find a source of unconditional approval.³² For Walker, as for many others, this source is located in the divine, or God, and it is a powerful reminder to those who are concerned with

³¹ Ibid., 161.

³² Ibid., 103.

shaping the emerging generation in leadership that the source of true identity, sustainability, courage and sacrifice is not found in the patterns and pursuits of a cultural context, or the transience of the social media community or in an ambitious climb up the ladder of education and achievement. In the context of a relationship in which a person is approved of, despite abilities or failures, there is found a deep source of freedom, “Choices that previously were unavailable to me because they would jeopardize my success or reputation, will now become available.”³³

In the second volume of his trilogy, Walker begins to discuss leadership in a more practical way introducing the reader to a suite of eight leadership techniques set against the stories of significant leaders from the past including: Abraham Lincoln, Jesus Christ, Martin Luther King and Ronald Reagan. In each case the issues of power and how one exercises power, is noted. Walker observes that the use of weakness rather than strength in many cited cases proved to be more powerful, which leads to a deeper consideration of the ecology of power in leadership. The eight strategies that Walker proposes are summarised as follows: The Foundational Strategy which outlines the power of setting up a clear foundation, articulating boundaries, rules and expectations in order to create a safe space for people to occupy and function.³⁴ The Commanding Strategy is required of leaders facing a crisis, and is used to manage and contain fear.³⁵ The Affiliative Strategy is essentially about finding emotional connection with people and winning hearts and

³³ Ibid., 106.

³⁴ Ibid., 199.

³⁵ Ibid., 211.

minds.³⁶ The Serving Strategy emphasises paying attention to what is actually needed rather than a leadership posture of dominance.³⁷ The Pacesetting Strategy which is required when “winning is the only acceptable outcome,”³⁸ requires leaders to exert every resource to this end. The Visionary Strategy focusses on a leader’s ability to offer people a different way to think and imagine.³⁹ The Consensual Strategy emphasises the capacity of a leader to build up the strength of relationships between people with trust and commitment.⁴⁰ Finally the Self-Emptying Strategy requires the determination and courage to be restrained and to be sacrificial despite the complexity of provocation.⁴¹

Ultimately Walker offers readers a very practical guide to explore how leaders move and adapt to various circumstances whilst acknowledging that no one single strategy listed is sufficient in itself to the changing nature of life and work.⁴² The confronting aspect of this volume is in recognising often leaders, and in the case of this project, Christian leaders, can find themselves stuck or comfortable with one particular style or strategy. Walker reminds readers, “Crucially, an effective leader resonates with his society – tuning into the same frequency, humming in the same key,”⁴³ rather than

³⁶ Ibid., 221.

³⁷ Ibid., 232-233.

³⁸ Ibid., 245.

³⁹ Ibid., 255.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 265-266.

⁴¹ Ibid., 279.

⁴² Ibid., 289.

⁴³ Ibid., 288.

resisting the need for deep attention and adaptive change. When a leader becomes stuck in a pattern from a sense of fear then one cannot be free or undefended to do what must be done.

In the final book of the trilogy Walker centres his writing on a broader sense of leadership vision and examines the many societal foundations that have led to the current failure of leadership in the West. Highlighting things like greed, hunger for money and cheap resources, celebrity, the growing divide between a rich minority and poorer majority, Walker offers some directions to which he suggests readers need to respond in order to move toward a flourishing future in the coming decades. In the context of highly individualised and isolated patterns of living, Walker insists we must choose to live more interdependent lives.⁴⁴ For leaders who choose to actively participate in the challenges of our future, and to lead people into a more sustainable, equitable and communal potential, one must insist on the life of formation personally, “cultivating an undefended life, deliberately and with discipline and focus, over years, not months.”⁴⁵ Doing this enables a leader to more fully embrace and address the realities and dynamics of personal hungers, of power, of weakness; and to pay attention to the complexities of our times in order to transform systems, practices and language in the effort to create positive and lasting change in the world.

Both Nouwen and Walker address the subversive and seductive aspects of current popular culture that would derail a life of formation toward purposeful engagement with

⁴⁴ Ibid., 409.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 121.

the world. In both the books reviewed above there is a clear and important call for future leaders to embrace the disciplines of simplicity, stillness, sacrifice and service and to be unafraid to wrestle vigorously with inner lives and drives in order to better serve the world. Emerging leaders, new and old, are called to invest in this process of integrated formation. It is not enough to simply seek after skills and strategies, because in the end, “Leadership is about who you are, not what you know or what skills you have.”⁴⁶

Leadership Into the Future

The Leadership Jump – Jimmy Long

The Leadership Jump is an interesting and articulate book that looks closely at the need for existing or established leaders and emerging leaders to build clear links in order to move into the future of Christian leadership in a changing world. Long locates his exploration of leadership primarily in a church context. He emphasises leadership in terms of the role of pastor/minister and argues that in light of the changing nature of the institutional church, as well as societal shifts in the understanding of leadership, Christian leaders need to work together creatively and truthfully to ensure a fruitful future.

The book explores the cultural shifts in how people perceive leadership in today’s world. Long articulates the broader changes in how things like power and authority are perceived and how a more traditional model of leadership has often been based more on what an individual can do rather than who they essentially are.⁴⁷ In a quickly changing

⁴⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁷ Jimmy Long, *The Leadership Jump. Building Partnerships Between Existing and Emerging Christian Leaders*, (IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 25, 42.

world, the idea that an individual in a particular role must appear to have the right expertise, vast experience, a guarded and assertive personality and an assumed or role-related authority in order to lead others and produce effective results is increasingly untenable. Long makes it clear that more and more the emerging generation of leaders are looking for, and embodying, a whole suite of different characteristics that speak more powerfully and responsibly to our current cultural context.

Long argues that today's leaders must grapple with a "post-heroic" notion of leadership. A heroic model is based on the strong, "silo" style of leadership with all the answers,⁴⁸ and allows little room for things such as humility, vulnerability, listening and collaboration. This heroic or hierarchical idea of leadership is under deep suspicion these days as younger people and emerging leaders look at the world in a much different way.⁴⁹ There is increasing regard for values such as honesty, authenticity and relationality and a recognition that just because something worked in the past does not mean it will be right for the future.⁵⁰ Especially as it relates to the nature of faith and belief, where the church has often roundly been criticised for hypocrisy, the need for emerging Christian leaders to embody humility and articulate a sense of brokenness and authenticity in truth, as well as pointing to credible and sustainable hope, seems to require a deep and lasting change in our understanding and modelling of leadership, both in the church and beyond. Long presses meaningfully into this space as he describes the approachable, authentic, learning

⁴⁸ Ibid., 50-53.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 51-52.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 53, 60-61, 67-73, 76.

leader,⁵¹ the initiating leader,⁵² the shepherding leader,⁵³ the hospitable and compassionate leader,⁵⁴ and uses dynamic metaphors such as the leader as a gardener to illustrate many of the nuances of flexibility, creativity and adaptiveness required by leaders today in an unstable world.⁵⁵

Much of what Long explores in this book is not new. Increasingly, in the past nine years since the book was published, researchers and leaders are articulating more and more of the need to shift our ideas about leadership character into more humble, relational and sustainable places.⁵⁶ It is also some-what limited, in my opinion, in regard to the scope of Christian leadership which Long situates in the more localised understanding of pastoring a church.

I am not convinced that Long grapples meaningfully with the nature of emerging generations and the characteristics that are shaped by their popular culture. What does community or identity or compassion mean to young people today? Many of these ideas are formed in a culture of social media saturation and I am suspicious about the idealistic nature of listing “necessary” emerging leadership qualities and how realistic they are.

⁵¹ Ibid., 74-78.

⁵² Ibid., 36

⁵³ Ibid., 37

⁵⁴ Ibid., 93-95.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 114-115.

⁵⁶ Brené Brown, *Dare To Lead. Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*, (London: Vermillion, 2018); Mark Strom, *Lead with Wisdom. How Wisdom Transforms Good Leaders into Great Leaders*, (Milton, QLD: John Wiley and Sons Australia, 2014); Bill Hull, *The Christian Leader. Rehabilitating Our Addiction to Secular Leadership*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016).

One of the best and clearest contributions of this book to the topic of this project is the focus on the need for existing and emerging leaders to work together. We can often default into thinking “out with the old and in with the new” which is often the subtle messaging of our broad consumer culture, but this book recognises the profound nature of creative partnerships across styles, generations and traditions. Leaders old and new can learn valuable lessons from one another and recognise “the need to work together because they are increasingly overwhelmed by problems they cannot solve alone.”⁵⁷

A final important contribution of this book is the focus on Jesus. It is easy to look to the more overtly structured models of leadership within the beginnings of the early church in the Bible, for example The Pastoral Epistles, Peter and Paul, and simply forget about Jesus. However, a focussed Christ-centred approach to leadership is both challenging and illuminating in what it can offer leaders today and will emerge as a significant focus of this project.

Kingdom Communities. Shining the Light of Christ Through Faith Hope and Love –
Andrew Menzies and Dean Phelan

In this recently published work, Menzies and Phelan offer readers a unique and timely insight into the general context of Australian Christian faith with some important observations and signposts for the future of how one understands faith and leadership in this increasingly diverse, pluralistic nation. Supported by robust research and biblical scholarship, the writers explore the changing nature of the church in Australia today, acknowledging the well-documented trends of decline in church attendance and

⁵⁷ Ibid., 112.

increasing institutional suspicion across denominations.⁵⁸ They offer readers a glimpse of the small, creative and organic pockets of hope that are popping up throughout Australia as people imagine a new way to embody the Kingdom of God and shine the light of Christ in interesting and surprising places.

Using a variety of case studies in company with key biblical narratives, Menzies and Phelan build a challenging argument for the church to reconsider the priorities of resources and energy that generally contribute to propping up the institutional church.⁵⁹ Instead of the ultimate measure of a successful or growing church being related to how many people attend on a Sunday, the authors suggest churches invest in empowering people to live, like, listen and love locally⁶⁰ and intentionally. As churches freely and generously encourage and equip people to be present in local neighbourhoods and everyday contexts, Kingdom characteristics are embodied providing a credible, tangible and integrated sign and foretaste of God's Kingdom.⁶¹

There is a deep acknowledgement in what is written that the nature of the author's message will be challenging and confronting to many comfortable in the local church context. While the authors are clear in highlighting the enormous value they place upon healthy communities of faith meeting together regularly, the sharp reminder of what church truly is and why it exists is the constant emphasis of this book. "The New Testament idea of *ekklesia* is a group of committed people who gather regularly, break

⁵⁸ Menzies and Phelan, *Kingdom Communities*, Chapter 1.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 116.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 137-150.

⁶¹ Ibid., 73.

bread, discern the activity of God and encourage one another as followers in the way of Christ. Then as they do these things, their fruitfulness becomes evident and the kingdom light is shone in many and varying dark places that need light.”⁶²

The stories included in the text provide readers with much to be hopeful about in sharp contrast to the many doom and gloom accounts of faith in Australia today. The key assertion of this book is that God is already at work in the many and varied contexts of everyday life, but there is a need to reimagine how to actively participate in God’s work that has already begun. One of the key practices that the authors suggest, and is of particular importance to this doctoral project, is the need for Christians to practice intentional humble listening.⁶³ More generally known for expounding a version of truth or doctrine in an effort to convince and convert, Christians and Christian leaders as a broad demographic are not renowned for good listening. The future of credible Christian leadership that has the potential for community transformation must embrace deep listening as a base practice. In an increasingly noisy, distracted world simple skills like listening and paying attention are becoming lost – to the detriment of leaders being able to glimpse God’s activity in local communities, workplaces and many diverse contexts.⁶⁴ The simple and powerful act of listening, which is much more dynamic than simply allowing another to speak whilst readying a speedy response, is about humility and reciprocity. To invite another person to tell their story engenders respect, builds trust and

⁶² Ibid., 218.

⁶³ Ibid., 143-145; 231-233; 252-254.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 144-145.

emphasizes the innate value in another person, rather than simply seeing them as the recipient of a message that must be proclaimed.

Another noteworthy contribution that the book makes to this doctoral project is the stated importance of theological seminaries in their ability to form leaders and influence patterns of cultural imagination for the future. As this project is located in the context of a seminary and the development of a new area of leadership formation it is significant to recognise “Seminaries hold wonderful reserves of wisdom that are not just for traditional ministry trainees. Increasingly, seminaries must equip wider cohorts of people with wisdom for life . . . they must become more easily accessible in the formation of all of God’s people as complex life, culture and ethical issues are negotiated.”⁶⁵ Essentially what is being explored in this doctoral project is the development of a new pathway for emerging leadership formation. The goal and location of this imagination for Christian leadership does not necessarily land in the church, but in broad everyday contexts such as neighbourhood, school, workplace and sporting club.

In addition to the clear focus on building a new imagination for dynamic and engaged Kingdom communities, Menzies and Phelan identify that current and future Kingdom Community leaders must model discipleship and community as a life-long formative journey. Such leadership “requires a lifetime of learning, understanding, openness and discernment of God’s movement and prompting in ourselves and our neighbours . . . [it] is about leading people into life-long spiritual formation and maturity,

⁶⁵ Ibid., 47.

rather than a subliminal model of good attendance and fellowship.”⁶⁶ The focus on formation present in *Kingdom Communities* is centrally important to this doctoral project. What is not being proposed in this project is to develop another skill-based leadership training program, instead to design a thoughtful, theologically reflective, integrated process of leadership formation grounded in praxis. As the authors state, the most effective way to be formed in the Way of Jesus is to be intentional about Christian practices,⁶⁷ and the four practices suggested as essential for the future are as follows: the practise of regular table fellowship and breaking bread; the practise of deep listening; the practise of hospitality to the stranger; and the practise of discernment.⁶⁸ Each of these practises offers something vital and sustainable in developing a model for a formative process for young leaders. As already stated, when young people live in an instantaneous world, where fear-fuelled nationalism is on the rise, information obesity is chronic, and relationships are often digital, developing rhythms for face-to-face connection, overcoming fear and being hospitable to the stranger, being reflective and listening and practising discernment towards deep wisdom are lifegiving and inspiring.

The future of Christian leadership is hopeful and bright according to Menzies and Phelan as well as Long. Such a future is envisioned in a commitment to reflecting the character of Christ, a commitment to partnering well, and discerning the small and wonderful stories of people responding to God’s spirit in everyday and surprising contexts. Living into such a future requires robust discipline, deep listening and a major

⁶⁶ Ibid., 239.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 243.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 249-262.

shift in the thinking of most mainstream ecclesial structures. Each of these requirements present current leadership structures with significant challenges, which this project hopes to address.

CHAPTER 4

A THEOLOGY OF SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP FORMATION

Developing a theological basis for a Kingdom-oriented approach to leadership formation must begin with an exploration of some of the more traditional biblically-based models of Christian leadership which have shaped modern understanding and practice. This chapter will investigate the leadership characteristics presented in the established understanding of the early church in the Pastoral Epistles, as well as detailing the theological complexities of understanding leadership, ministry, mission and evangelism through a lens of “success” and “failure”. Subsequently, a Kingdom-oriented approach to leadership will be introduced which will firstly articulate the characteristics of the Kingdom of God as found in the Gospels, and then explore the role of a leader that embodies such Kingdom characteristics. Finally a new vision for young adult leadership formation will be presented that encompasses deeper spiritual practices and an integrated approach to theology, work and everyday life.

A Traditional Model – Leadership Characteristics and the Pastoral Epistles

As has already been articulated in this project, an imagination and model of possibilities for what Christian leadership looks like outside of an ecclesial context seems

to be limited. It is important to acknowledge the historically powerful, shaping impact of certain biblical texts on more “traditional” understandings of leadership as we consider Christian leadership for the future. First and second Timothy and Titus, or the Pastoral Epistles, focus largely on the emerging structural nature of the early church and have offered readers a clear model of layered Christian leadership that has resonated throughout the history of the Church. The letters specifically emphasize the qualifications of leaders, the development of leaders, the organisational frameworks for overseeing church members - including discipline, and are largely concerned with integral, effective governance and sound doctrine.¹ These letters have been highly valued historically,² and undoubtedly provide some of the clearest and most direct instruction on a Christian, church-based, model of pastoral leadership.³

Acknowledging the impact of the Pastoral Epistles as a key shaping influence of the Church’s understanding of Christian leadership, and it has arguably been the primary model for structuring church governance and leadership, it is important to offer a brief critique of said model in light of the many cultural complexities and limitations that emerge when reading and interpreting the letters in present times. The first point that is significant is that one must read the Pastoral Epistles in the context of the time in which

¹ Theology of Work Project, *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016), 851.

² For example they helped to establish the classic pattern of ministry and church structure (bishop, presbyter, deacon), which were crucial in the triumph of the early Catholic Church over severe challenges from Marcionites and Gnosticism, which has enabled the Church to endure for nearly two millennia.” James Dunn, “The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Volume XI, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2000), 775.

³ Tim Patrick, “The Pastoral Offices in the Pastoral Epistles and the Church of England’s First Ordinand,” in Brian S. Rosner, Andrew S. Malone and Trevor J. Burke eds., *Paul as Pastor*, (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 159, 163.

they were written. Understanding that slavery, for example, was not a moral concern at the stage of writing and was simply a way of categorising the lowest rung of the economic ladder is important,⁴ as is the recognition of the fact that Christianity was brand new – without thousands of years of history and tradition behind it. The important thing for this early community of faith was that it “fit in” (1 Tm 2:1-2) with the understood cultural codes of the time.⁵

The author of the Pastoral Letters⁶ asserts a world-view based on, “God as ‘Father’, the patriarchal head-of-a-very-large-household, so that the idea of ‘God’s household’ functions as the ground of a practical theology that decrees every ‘family member’ ought to take up their subordinated position in relation to this father and master God.”⁷ It is important for the author to promote an image of the gathered community of faith as conforming to the socially established Roman imperial household hierarchy (1 Tm 3:15), the ideal of which is modelling obedience and subservience in the correct order: slaves obey masters, children obey parents and wives, husbands.⁸ Of course one cannot simply accept on face value the ideas and images portrayed in the Pastoral Epistles without a proper critical reading that understands context and culture, or it is likely to lead, and has historically led, to many conflicting ideas around leadership.

⁴ Dunn, “The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus,” 825.

⁵ Ibid., 801-802.

⁶ Due attention cannot be given to subjects such as authorship (which is consistently disputed in the Pastorals) or a comparison to the “undisputed letters” of Paul.

⁷ Annette Bourland Huizenga, *1-2 Timothy. Titus*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016), xlii.

⁸ Joanna Dewey, “1 Timothy,” in Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, eds., *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, (Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 353-354.

Thematically, this collection of letters embodies some key images of leadership that are significant to highlight and which, without a contextual reading, have been used in repressive and polarising ways historically. Leadership is depicted as being male, authoritarian (1 Tm 6:1-2; 2 Tm 2:24-26; Ti 2:15), ordered (1 Tm 3:4-5; 12-13; Ti 1:5), aggressively instructive (1 Tm 5:20; Ti 1:10-13; 2:9-10), focussed on teaching pure, “sound” doctrine (1 Tm 1:3-7; 4:6-7; 2 Tm 1:13-14; 4:2-4), and sinless or perfect in character (1 Tm 3:2-10; 4:7-9; 6:11-14, Ti 1:1-8). There is little room for error or people who have appeared to have sinned⁹ (2 Tm 3:2-7; 13; Ti 1:15-16), no room for women¹⁰ (1 Tm 2:11-12), seemingly little emphasis on grace (2 Tm 3; Ti 1:15-16; 3:10-44), and an innately inward focus on the establishment over and above a focus on external concerns such as charitable assistance, and who might be worthy recipients of such assistance (1 Tim 5:3-16). Robinson and Wall summarise well the complex nature of reading the Pastoral Epistles in modern times,

. . . the catalogue of credentials for church leadership given in 1 Timothy 3, even though presented as a guideline, has been prescribed in an artless manner to exclude mature believers from using their talents to secure the congregation’s spiritual and social well-being. And the sentiment that the role of slaves is to benefit their masters (1 Tim. 6:1-2), even when contextualised by the social world of ancient Roman culture, sounds a discordant note in today’s world, which has been put on alert by the horrors of human trafficking. No wonder many modern Christians, who, like the author of these letters, seek to adapt the gospel to culturally acceptable patterns of behaviour, find these instructions offensive.¹¹

⁹ William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary. Pastoral Epistles*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 403-404.

¹⁰ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Letters to Paul’s Delegates. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1996, 134-137.

¹¹ Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall, *Called To Lead. Pauls Letters to Timothy for a New Day*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 8.

It is important to consider whether the Pastoral Epistles provide us with a valuable model of Christian leadership today. Certainly on one level it appears that they do. There are many books and commentaries that go to some effort to prove the worth of these texts, in modern times, to those who would question their value. Each emphasize the values of integrity, modelling a level of morality and Godly living in all aspects of life, including one's household, as well as a high value for competence in areas of teaching and wisdom.¹² Each of these values is as important today in leadership as it appeared to be in biblical times. The commitment of leaders in the Pastoral epistles to faithfully hold themselves to rigorous personal and spiritual standards is admirable. In a world today that appears to celebrate superficiality and tolerate high levels of depravity, a leader that models a transparent integration of belief and behaviour is to be applauded. It is, however, impossible to sidestep the overarching aspects of patriarchy and the images of authoritative leadership that are exclusive, contextually and historically bound. These "texts of terror"¹³ have on many occasions historically, and still today, been used to silence voices and "to push sisters and brothers to the harsh margins of a community called to instantiate God's love in the world."¹⁴ Ultimately one simply cannot view the Pastoral Epistles as a definitive model of Christian leadership for young leaders today, although a broad application of the emphasis on personal and spiritual standards and the

¹² Theology of Work Project, *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*, 853, 857, 870-871.

¹³ This is a reference to Phyllis Tribble's 1984 book: *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*; Elna Mouton and Ellen van Wolde, "New Life From A Pastoral Text of Terror? Gender Perspectives on God and Humanity," *Scriptura*, 111 (2012:3), 583-601.

¹⁴ Robinson and Wall, *Called To Lead*, 8.

devotion to wisdom and teaching are worth retaining in future leadership formation design.

Christian Leadership, Success and Failure

The second significant aspect of more traditional models of Christian leadership to address is the conventional emphasis on success and failure. When considering Christian leadership today it is important to understand what constitutes success and failure. Especially important for this doctoral project is to wrestle with what it means for leadership in non-ecclesial contexts to “succeed” if the result is not an understood, tangible or measurable one.

More often than not Christian leadership success or failure has been based on notions of quantifiable results, such as numerical presence and growth.¹⁵ As Huizing notes, “the popular Christian leadership press likes the highly ‘successful’ pastor who started with a small group and within a few short years cultivated a church of thousands.”¹⁶ Other methods to measure success have been based on how many individual commitments to Christ or “conversion” events, whether that be the physical act of stepping forward for prayer, raising a hand to indicate commitment or uttering the “sinner’s prayer” have been made. In my own personal experiences of ministry, I recall the pressure to make an invitation at the conclusion of my messages, to give people an

¹⁵ Consider the phenomenon of Billy Graham’s evangelistic crusades. Despite many other achievements his “success” is more often than not related to the vast numbers of attendees and responders at his events, as well as his close relationships with people in power. For example, Christianity Today, “Billy Graham. Evangelist to Millions,” *Christianity Today*, August 2008, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/evangelistsandapologists/billy-graham.html>

¹⁶ Russell L. Huizing, “Bringing Christ to the Table of Leadership: Moving Toward a Theology of Leadership,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, Vol.5, No.2, (Fall 2011), 61.

opportunity to make a decision of faith. I recall, as a relatively young person, being afraid of what it would mean should no-one respond at the end. I was afraid of being a failure.

It is not wrong to want to examine effectiveness and applaud visible change and growth. In fact it is important to a growing sense of community purpose and hope to celebrate outcomes. However it is extremely difficult to truly measure the desired outcomes of discipleship and mission. Transformed lives, spiritual maturing, the exercise of love and acceptance, are hard to measure and so what often happens is that “successful” impact is measured by more easily perceived results such as financial giving, attendance and observable participation.¹⁷ Understanding the success or failure of the Church is also impacted by the continuing decline in “measurable” results like church attendance. Alan Roxburgh outlines several Church movements over recent decades¹⁸ that have attempted to react to, or “fix” what appears to be the failing of Churches and concludes, “There is an increasing recognition . . . that tactics, metrics, programs, demographics, health assessments, or strategies for institutional reorganization are not approximations of the Jesus movement the Spirit is inviting us into.”¹⁹

Emerging Christian leadership needs to be modelled less on an understanding of success, that is “performance-based,” and more on the person of Jesus. This is slightly problematic however. Considering the life of Jesus one could argue that according to the

¹⁷ Mike Bonham, “Measuring What Matters,” *Christianity Today*, April 2012, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2012/spring/measuringmatters.html>.

¹⁸ Roxburgh, *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World*, 17-22. Including the Church Growth Movement in the 1970s-1980s, the Corporate Approach of the 1980s-1990s and the Emerging Church.

¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

measures of the world he was not “successful.” Kevin Rowe goes so far as to say “the most startling thing about Jesus’ ministry is that it ended in failure.”²⁰ This seems particularly pertinent in the passion narratives.

Take for example Matthew 27; the account of Jesus’ crucifixion is particularly confronting in light of what it means in today’s world to succeed. Not only was Jesus being executed at the end of his public ministry, but his few followers had either betrayed him, denied him or fled in fear, with the exception of some women watching from a distance (27:55). A leader today would never aspire to the scenario that faces Jesus in the moments prior to his horrific death. Open derision (27:39), suspicion about teachings and beliefs (27:40), undermining of core identity and capacity (Mt 27:40, 42-43), maligned and disrespected by other leaders and authorities (27:41), even the lowest of the low who were dying beside him taunted him (27:44). It certainly would appear that Jesus went to his death an apparent failure if the criterion for his leadership success was based purely on visible, measurable human standards.

Of course Jesus was not a leadership disaster, and the story of the resurrection is evidence of this. The powerful legacy of Jesus’ life and message is exactly why we need a better frame of reference for understanding the effect of Christian leadership. This is where the language of impact and influence becomes significant. Jesus was a natural leader, “he had followers because he influenced people from his person and innate character,”²¹ in effect this is what we are to model emerging Christian leadership on

²⁰ C. Kevin Rowe, “Failure as Christ-shaped Leadership,” *Faith and Leadership*, November 7, 2011, <https://www.faithandleadership.com/c-kavin-rowe-failure-christ-shaped-leadership>.

²¹ Hull, *The Christian Leader*, 17.

today. The strength of Jesus' model of leadership was his inverting the normal, social understanding of power and authority, in favour of sacrificial, inclusive love which still resonates provocatively today,

By precept and example Jesus taught servant leadership – even sacrificial leadership. He reversed the secular understanding of success: 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all' (Mark 9:35). Jesus not only called his followers to humble service. He called upon them to sacrifice, and even to die for the sake of His cause, if need be. In all four Gospels we can find this saying: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it' (Mark 8:34-35).²²

It is normal to want to be successful, produce results for hard work and be noticed for our efforts, and when Christian leadership is modelled on more worldly patterns²³ of leadership it actually becomes necessary to produce and perform. There are, however, a number of complexities when Christian leadership is focussed on results. Especially in light of the emphasis of this doctoral project, developing a model of Christian leadership that presses meaningfully and credibly into non-religious contexts, it is essential to help young people understand what influence and impact they can have, in a work-place for example, when the measures are not simply that lots of workmates will be expected to attend a local church or a work-place prayer meeting.

Aspiring to succeed in these more measurable ways is not in and of itself a bad thing. However the embodiment of gentler aspects of the kingdom can be equally and more profoundly seen as a measure of impact. For example, to be able to listen deeply; to

²² Robert M. Johnston, "The Gospels," in *Servants and Friends. A Biblical Theology of Leadership*, ed. Skip Bell, (MI: Andrews University Press, 2014), 160. It should be noted that the saying about taking up the cross is only really in this form in the synoptic Gospels.

²³ Such as producing measurable results or Key Performance Indicators as a metric for success and failure.

practice inclusion; to be a person of joy, hope and grace; to value honesty, and ethical behaviour; each of these characteristics can be seen as influential measures of healthy Christian leadership.

A reframing of Christian leadership “success” needs to emphasise less an instantaneous approach, and focus more on long-term goals. Consistently and intentionally practicing the gentle presence of the Kingdom in normal everyday moments takes time. Christian leaders can go about this challenging task, while prayerfully pressing toward a time when credibility and trust are established, and there is permission to exert more overt influence and speak meaningfully into people’s lives to bring about salvation and restoration. This idea of Christian leadership is much less about being motivated by a pressing need to “succeed” in evangelisation, and much more motivated by the model of Jesus to bring love, hope and the fullest sense of restoration and salvific transformation. Young Christians today can and should be invited into such creative ways of considering their leadership as they bring impact and influence into all aspects of everyday life and work. A formation program that encourages young leaders to be truly and humbly themselves as well as purposefully embodying the depth of character seen in Jesus’ inverted Kingdom of love, will be significant in challenging and reimagining Christian leadership into the future.

Kingdom – Centered Leadership

Having offered a brief, yet pointed critique of some aspects of the more traditional understanding of Christian leadership, and highlighting some of the significant limitations and complexities, it is appropriate to explore a more integral and sustainable

model for an emerging generation. This model offers a less-traditional and quantifiable approach to leadership. The image of the Kingdom of God, and the biblical depiction of Jesus as God's anointed king of this Kingdom, will be the theological basis for creating a new practical strategy for Christian leadership formation today.

In any study of the Kingdom of God it is important to acknowledge that the Bible does not offer a concrete definition of said Kingdom. Jesus does not explain it and the Gospels offer hints and metaphors couched within parables and teachings, but no direct definition is available. In the absence of overt direction, "the defining characteristic in evangelicalism has been abstracted,"²⁴ at best, or entirely ignored at worst.²⁵ The Bible does, however, offer significant pointers and examples of core Kingdom characteristics and calls people to embody the ethos of the Kingdom in word and action.

The Kingdom of God is first introduced in Mark's Gospel in the words of Jesus himself, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news,"²⁶ Mk 1:15. In both Mark's Gospel as well as in Matthew (for example Mt 4:23) the Kingdom of God is depicted as being about good news. The first century Jewish hearers of this message would have held a unique perspective on what good news meant, particularly in light of their historical circumstances, as Wright explains, "In the light of the Jewish background . . . this cannot but have been heard as the announcement that exile was at last drawing to a close, that Israel was about to be

²⁴ Patrick Schreiner, *The Kingdom of God and the Glory of the Cross*, (Illinois: Crossway, 2018), 15.

²⁵ Tom Wright, *How God Became King. Getting to the Heart of the Gospels*, (London: SPCK Publishing, 2012), 32.

²⁶ NRSV Translation.

vindicated against her enemies, that her god was returning at last to deal with evil, to right wrongs, to bring justice to those who were thirsting for it like dying people in a desert.”²⁷

As the Gospel accounts unfold, the Jews begin to grasp that Jesus’ message of good news does not remotely fit their pre-conceived expectations, and in fact offers some very serious and provoking challenges for Israel. In Luke 4 Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah and declares to all present in the synagogue that the prophecy is fulfilled in him today (Luke 4:24). The powerful words in this chapter begin to specify exactly who the recipients of this good news are, and as the Jewish audience begins to comprehend the words of Jesus in 4:20-27, as he likens himself to Elijah and Elisha,²⁸ the crowd begins to turn on Jesus in anger. What is clear to his Jewish listeners is that Jesus’ Kingdom of good news is freely available to all, including those generally characterised as the outcast ones – the poor, the blind, the captive and the oppressed (4:18-19). This Kingdom is unexpected and surprising in nature as the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast in Luke 13:18-21 describe. There is a dramatic characterisation of the Kingdom in these short parables – the Kingdom may appear in small, unexpected ways, but is ultimately powerful, irrepressible, and able to transform.²⁹

The immediate and challenging reality of the character of God’s Kingdom is that

²⁷ N.T. Wright, *Jesus and The Victory of God*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 172.

²⁸ The stories of Elijah and Elisha provoke an angry response because these stories are only related by the fact that God’s blessing and salvation was extended to the Gentiles. So what appeared to his listeners as a promise for them quickly turned into a confronting lesson about who the “blessed” ones are in God’s Kingdom: Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1991), 79, 81-82.

²⁹ R. Alan Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Volume IX, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1995), 276.

it is inherently inclusive and overtly about good news. In addition to Luke 4, there are a plethora of examples in all four Gospel accounts of the Kingdom of God bringing about opportunity, dignity, healing, voice and acceptance for those who were marginalised and restricted by systems of oppression and life-denying power. Jesus intentionally embraced and included many who were culturally overlooked including: The unclean (Mk 1:40-42; Mt 8:1-4); women and children (Jn 4: 1-42; Jn 20:11-18; Lk 8:40-56; Mt 18:1-7; Lk 18:15-17); foreigners and those of seeming dubious repute (Lk 10:25-37; Matt 9:9-13; Lk 7:36-50); the poor (Lk 14:12-24; Mt 25:31-46); and the possessed or oppressed (Lk 4:31-37; 6:27).

Jesus does not simply acknowledge the history and prophecies about God's Kingdom in the Old Testament, that are defined by such earthy realities as blessing, justice for all people, abundance, restoration of dignity and hope, nourishment, fruitfulness and joy (Dt 28:1-14; Is 9:7; 61; Jer 31:12; Hos 14:7; Am 9:14-15), he embodies these things in real ways, "He eats with sinners, provides food, heals people's bodies, washes the disciple's feet, and gives them his body and blood."³⁰ In his ministry and leadership Jesus brings about the realities of good news in practical and inclusive ways. Therefore, any embodiment of the Kingdom of God, by Jesus' followers today, simply must be good news to those who encounter it. Kingdom-based leadership and proclamation must actually produce joy, "In short, for the Kingdom of God to be *euaggelion* means that it must make its hearers rejoice."³¹

³⁰ Schreiner, *The Kingdom of God*, 142.

³¹ Jon Sobrino, *Jesus The Liberator. A Historical-Theological View*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 78.

This good news of the Kingdom, as manifest in the life and teaching of Jesus, is centrally located in sacrificial love. John 13 offers one of the most poignant moments of Jesus' teaching as he humbly adopts the role of servant in the menial task of washing his disciple's feet. This is a symbolic act for Jesus, as the word that is used for the removal of his garments in verse 4 (τιθημι *tithémi*), is also used to describe Jesus laying down his life.³² Jesus concludes the encounter with a radical and blunt assertion, in acting out such sacrificial love towards one another, the entire world would know his disciples (13:34-35), and the glory of God would be revealed. The Kingdom of God, according to the Gospel accounts, is characterised by unconditional, sacrificial love that seeks justice for those denied justice, is hospitable and welcoming with radical inclusivity, and bears fruit in abundance, hope and joy.

Embodying the Kingdom: towards an integrated and credible model of leadership formation

The power of the Kingdom of God, as it defies specific definition, is the implication that followers are invited to not simply know about it, but to inhabit, live-into and embody characteristics of the Kingdom in practical and life-giving ways. Herein lies the challenge for Christian leaders today. If the central tenets of Kingdom living are based on things such as love, joy, inclusion, justice, sacrifice and hospitality, to name a few, it follows that leaders embody such qualities in their living and working, which is neither easy nor immediate. In the past, education, including the education of Christian leaders, has often and predominantly been about information. The goal of this type of

³² Gail O'Day, "The Gospel of John" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Volume IX, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1995), 723.

focus in education has generally been about the creation of a system of ideas, beliefs and finally doctrines that culminate in an understood and defensible Christian world-view.³³ Such educational focus has aimed to equip women and men for the work of Christian leadership, generally in ecclesial contexts, with the right kinds of knowledge and skill to tackle the multitude of tasks and questions that accompany a life of pastoral ministry. The reality of developing Christian leadership training based on a Kingdom-centered model is that it is equally, if not more so, about heart, practice and discipline than it is about information and skills. Smith in his exploration of education poses this question, “What if education wasn’t first and foremost about what we know, but about what we love?”³⁴ This question is at the center of this doctoral project, and the recognition that the Christian leader of the future needs not only programs that can challenge them intellectually, but also can potentially shape hearts and lives – this is the process of formation. “Education should not be the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”³⁵

When one considers then a Kingdom-centered model of leadership formation, it has to be building towards engagement, credibility and sustainability. Jesus’ leadership demonstrates a consistent engagement in his cultural context. He is acutely aware of the world he is a part of, and active within it. Rarely does the Bible depict Jesus as hiding away from the crowds or practicing his faith in exclusive or detached ways. Instead we read stories of him eating meals with all kinds of characters (Mk 2:15-16), enjoying

³³ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom. Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 17-18.

³⁴ Ibid., 18.

³⁵ This quote is famously attributed to the Irish poet William Butler Yeats.

wedding banquets (Jn 2), surrounded by crowds (Mt 5-7), and out in the elements with his friends and followers. He is present to witness moments of need, social exclusion, or acts of injustice and ready to speak or intervene. He understands the dynamics of power and control at play in his time and engages fully as a representation of the new and surprising hope present in the Kingdom of God he represents.

As a result of his intentional engagement, Jesus has a level of integrity and credibility that would be the envy of many leaders of his day. Jesus calls out the blatant hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Mt 15:1-9) and offers people a very different model of leadership. He is first and foremost a person of integrity. In Mt 5:39 Jesus taught “if someone strikes you on the right cheek turn to him the other also” and followed up with “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” in Mt 5:44. These are two extremely challenging scenarios for anyone to live up to and yet Jesus does. Prior to his death, in his helpless innocence, he is cruelly beaten (Mt 26:67; 27:26, 30) and in his suffering ultimately finds the strength to pray on behalf of those ridiculing and killing him (Lk 23:34). “Jesus . . . exhibits the antithesis of hypocrisy, namely, congruity between word and deed . . . the Son of God first does what he asks others to do,”³⁶ and herein lies the key to credibility in the sphere of leadership influence.

Whilst being engaged and working towards credibility are important keys to understanding Kingdom leadership, so also is the ability to be sustained in leadership and practice. Many leaders today, including Christians, live under the legacy of words like

³⁶ Dale C. Allison Jr., “The Embodiment of God’s Will: Jesus in Matthew,” in *Seeking The Identity of Jesus*, eds. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 127.

“burnout.”³⁷ An addiction to working hard and sacrificially, an over-emphasis on caring for others as opposed to caring for ones-self, a misplaced sense of ego and control, an often brutally vulnerable working context and an unhealthy focus on “success” have all been factors that contribute to burnout within Christian leadership contexts.³⁸ Add to this the increased hostility toward people of faith, including Christian faith, in the marketplace of Australian public life,³⁹ and it becomes even more important to highlight the need for sustainable and resilient practices among young Christian leaders today.

Jesus teaches with pointed clarity the need to be intimately connected to a source of faith, hope and power in order to produce fruit, but more importantly “fruit that will last” (Jn 15:16), the source being Jesus himself. Jesus models this intimate dependence in the chapters preceding John 15, as he describes his relationship to his Father God, “the Father is in me, and I in the Father” (Jn 10:38; 14:10). “God is the source and guiding hand that governs Jesus and his work.”⁴⁰ Once again, as Jesus models first, so then he invites his followers to do likewise. In order to be sustained in discipleship and leadership one needs to be deeply connected to the “true vine” (Jn 15:1). In the relatively few biblical examples where Jesus disengages from the urgencies of his public life it is to tap into this sustaining source of power from his Father, (Mt 14:23; Mk 1:35; Lk 6:12).

³⁷ For an example of a definition see: Sherrie Bourg Carter, “The Tell Tale Signs of Burnout. Do You Have Them?” *Psychology Today*, November 26, 2013, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/high-octane-women/201311/the-tell-tale-signs-burnout-do-you-have-them>.

³⁸ E. A. Jackson-Jordan, “Clergy Burnout and Resilience: A Review of the Literature,” *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counselling*, 2013, 67(1), 1-5.

³⁹ Greg Sheridan, *God is Good For You. A Defence of Christianity in Troubled Times*, (Crowes Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2018), 21, 29.

⁴⁰ O’Day, “The Gospel of John,” 757.

Luke 5:15 offers readers a clear example, albeit a glimpse, of the demanding and exhausting nature of Jesus' leadership, "But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray." Kingdom leadership for Jesus was about bringing good news, embodied in practical acts of love such as teaching, welcoming and healing, but he also needed space to be renewed and reinvigorated by the source of his power in order to be sustained in his work.

The three aspects of a Kingdom-centred leadership formation that have been described: engagement, credibility and sustainability, must not only be based on the model of Jesus, but must have some practical dimensions for today, and it is important to note that this type of formation cannot be done in isolation. Up until now the local church has not been a focus of this research, but it must be stated that sustainable Christian leadership formation should be done in healthy partnership with churches, not at the expense of them. Whilst acknowledging the limitations of the local church to offer high levels of academic and formative training, one must also acknowledge the integral role that a healthy church should play in encouraging, teaching and sending people into neighbourhoods, families, schools, workplaces "to fill the culture with people who exhibit the character of Christ and influence people in the way Jesus did."⁴¹ A sustainable program of leadership formation must include active integration of participants in healthy local churches – for encouragement, accountability and the ongoing disciplines of community worship, prayer and teaching. To encourage separation from the local church

⁴¹ Hull, *The Christian Leader*, 37.

context is to undermine the important role gathered faith communities play in the lives of our Christian young adults today.

The specific practical implications of a formation program designed for young adult Christian leaders include many things that will be developed in the following chapter, but are important to highlight in reference to engagement, credibility and sustainability. When it comes to engagement within the public square, popular culture and the everyday contexts of life and work, modelling humility, practicing deep listening and paying attention are fundamental in building towards a credible presence that can lead to opportunities for informed and appropriate influence. In turn, modelling such things naturally builds relational trust and rapport, each significant in building integrity and credibility. It is out of this fertile ground that a leader can exercise a level of transformative influence, not simply to engage with a person or context as a project to be worked on, a problem to be solved, or a soul to be saved but motivated by love and resulting in good news. The backdrop of such an engaged vision must be a commitment by participants to practice accountability, truth telling and vulnerability in community as well as engaging intentionally in spiritually formative disciplines that help sustain intimate connection to God, the source of hope and faith.

Implications. Integrated Leadership Formation – developing life-long learners

When it comes to an integrated leadership formation program it is important to note the various elements that are being brought together in the design. A robust level of intellectual rigour is critical in creating an academic basis that fits within University guidelines and context. This must include not only an accredited curriculum but also a

resource base that includes books, journal articles, blogs, art and speakers that encourage participants to bump their ideas and thoughts up against diverse beliefs and differing world-views. In more traditional training models this has been the most significant emphasis in terms of resources and energy. There is no doubt that academic achievement and articulate rigour is important, but the irony of educating Christian leaders is that often we have produced people that are competent preachers, teachers and “doers” and not necessarily humble attentive listeners and life-long learners.⁴² As Dietrich Bonhoeffer astutely observed,

Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians because these Christians are talking when they should be listening. But he who can no longer listen to his brother will soon be no longer listening to God either. This is the beginning of the death of the spiritual life, and in the end there is nothing left but spiritual chatter and condescension arrayed in pious words.⁴³

An integrated approach to leadership formation will also include a specific focus on deep listening and paying attention as skills to develop for emerging Christian leaders.

Much has been written in recent times on the need for leaders to listen more,⁴⁴ and for Christian leaders this is an invitation to humility. As Wright argues, “gospel people are, by definition, humble people. It is the gospel [good news] that is great and glorious.

⁴² A review of most seminary curricula will reveal a multitude of courses focussed on preaching and teaching, practical ministry focus areas, governance etc., and very few (if any) on paying attention and deep listening. In the context of the University of Divinity the very minor focus on listening as a skill is couched within the very niche context of advanced pastoral counselling: <https://units.divinity.edu.au/scheduled/for/2019/all/all/all/DA?page=2>.

⁴³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, (London, SCM, 1972), 75.

⁴⁴ For example, Mike Myatt, “Why Most Leaders Need to Shut Up and Listen,” *Forbes*, February 9, 2012, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemyatt/2012/02/09/why-most-leaders-need-to-shut-up-listen/#1c14efb36ef9>; Cyndi Sax, “Listening Is the Secret Weapon of Good Leaders,” *Association for Talent Development*, April 5, 2018, <https://www.td.org/insights/listening-is-the-secret-weapon-of-good-leaders>; Craig Impelman, “The Importance of Listening in Leadership,” *Success Magazine*, June 13, 2018, <https://www.success.com/the-importance-of-listening-in-leadership/> to mention just a few.

We are simply its obedient servants . . . the gospel is the treasure, and we are nothing more than the clay pot in which it is kept (2 Cor 4:7).”⁴⁵ Jesus’ words in Mt 5:16 say, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven,” are a significant challenge for a self-aggrandizing dominant culture that is often mimicked in Christian faith, the light that shines, is not to illuminate a heroic leader, but always points to the source of life, hope and joy, God.

As emerging leaders are encouraged to integrate humility and deep listening into their practice, mutuality and respect will be more evident. William Ury, one of the world’s leading experts on negotiation and mediation, suggests that listening is the essential and often transformative aspect of communication for three key reasons, which relate clearly to Christian leadership. Firstly, listening helps the hearer to understand. If we want to exert influence, which can also mean getting people to change their mind, we must understand what their mind is. Secondly listening helps build trust and rapport, it shows we care – everybody wants to be heard. Finally, listening to another makes it much more likely that the other person will listen to us.⁴⁶

In Matthew 23:8-10, Jesus warns his disciples not to call themselves “Rabbi” or “instructor.” In their haste to lead others, to teach and preach, it is common for Christian leaders today to simply forget that they are in fact disciples first. It would appear that Jesus is reminding his followers, including leaders today, that, “the posture of a beginner

⁴⁵ N. T. Wright, *Simply Jesus*, 278.

⁴⁶ William Ury, “The Power of Listening,” *TEDxSanDiego*, January 7, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAXfavo1OQo>.

is the only way to be a disciple.”⁴⁷ This challenging call to humility and listening is a pathway for building credibility and trust towards transformative influence, as Brené Brown says “[Trust] is earned not through heroic deeds, or even highly visible actions, but through paying attention, listening and gestures of genuine care and connection.”⁴⁸

Alongside academic engagement and humble, deep listening the design of this formation program encourages students to engage in real contexts to enable the applied and formative practices of deep listening, paying attention and embodying Kingdom characteristics to be exercised in experimental and reflective ways. In an age of increasing diversity it is not tenable to assume that a course on Christian leadership, taught in the context of a certain demographic will automatically translate into all the diverse contexts that students find themselves in. It is important to locate “theoretical” training in practical contexts and locations. One can learn, for example, biblical principles of leadership in a classroom, but to apply them into one’s work in a nursing home or investment banking context, or apply them into a neighbourhood context, require much different proficiencies. Students are encouraged to actually do something practical with the information that they are learning, to experiment and to then reflect on both the joys and the challenges, in a collaborative cohort of peers context.

A final aspect to be integrated in the project design is a practical focus on formation. In light of the ongoing pressures on Christian leaders today, as well as the cultural influences of instant gratification and information on young adults, it is important

⁴⁷ Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, 97.

⁴⁸ Brown, *Dare To Lead*, 32.

to offer a model of training that presses into a journey of discovery over time. Students are encouraged to explore and create rhythms of spiritual discipline, the goal of which is to build deeper personal levels of spiritual resilience and wisdom towards sustainability.

Nouwen in his book *In the Name of Jesus* highlights three key areas that often derail leaders in their quest for healthy sustainability and impact. He images the three areas against the backdrop of Matthew 4 as the temptations of relevance, popularity and power.⁴⁹ The most significant contribution of Nouwen's insights in this book are not so much about promoting an understanding of what potential leadership vulnerabilities exist, but in his wise pairing of each temptation with practical spiritual disciplines. The practices he suggests, and that Jesus models in Matthew 4, are prayerfulness and deep listening; confession and forgiveness in the context of faithful community; and rigorous theological reflection.⁵⁰ Each practice over time invites participants to gently relinquish control, seek humble guidance, pursue accountability and ultimately hone the skill of being able to see the world through a spiritual lens. Of course these are not the only practices that are significant in empowering students toward life-long learning, spiritual resilience and healthy sustainability, but they certainly provide a solid basis from which to creatively experiment.

An integrated approach to leadership formation, based on Kingdom characteristics, is ultimately all about developing more broadly an integrated theological framework for how one sees God's presence and action in normal, everyday life and

⁴⁹ Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 87-88.

work. For example, Colossians 3:23-24 states, “Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters . . . you serve the Lord Christ.” For too long Christians have lived into a compartmentalised world-view of sacred and secular, or the idea that for ninety minutes on a Sunday morning we enter a dedicated sacred space where we can dutifully practice our tithing and eloquent public prayer, then congratulate ourselves on fulfilling our spiritual obligations. The rest of the week can then potentially progress with little sense of “spiritual” engagement and responsibility. Such a compartmentalised narrative has contributed to Christians being commonly criticised for hypocrisy and therefore a lack of credibility, and this perception needs to be transformed. As Sayers so eloquently reminds us, “The church’s approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him to not be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours and to come to church on Sundays. What the church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables.”⁵¹ There is an important challenge here for emerging Christian leaders to embrace. God is at work, in the world, in all kinds of unexpected ways and interesting places. When young leaders can comprehend this profound integrated reality and complement it with intentional theological reflection on everyday experiences, they will be more effectively equipped to embody the hope of God’s Kingdom in many unique and diverse contexts.

This chapter has established an integrated theological foundation for Christian leadership formation, based on the Kingdom-oriented model of leadership that Jesus embodied in the Gospels. It is aimed primarily at young adults, but arguably relevant and

⁵¹ Quoted in Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*, (New York: Dutton, 2012), 76-77.

valuable to leaders of all ages. In exploring and highlighting various limitations presented in the more traditional biblical and measured model of Christian pastoral leadership, it is certainly clear that a fresh vision of Christian leadership is needed today for the emerging generation. As young leaders are educated in Kingdom-based characteristics such as love, joy, inclusion, justice, sacrifice and hospitality, and then invited to embody these qualities in practical contexts and accountable communities of faith, the result will potentially be more integral societal engagement, growing public credibility, healthy resilience and sustainability. Ultimately the proposed vision for a model of Christian leadership that engages meaningfully and sustainably with the world, not only the local church, is the preferred future. The following chapter will outline the specific goals and strategies that give practical dimensions to this theological foundation.

PART THREE

GOALS AND STRATEGY

CHAPTER 5

COURSE DESIGN AND PLAN

Having established that there are clear limitations to current models of leadership formation offered by Stirling and that a new, creative sense of imagination for how Christian leadership in Australia can be practiced beyond religious settings is needed, it is important to acknowledge that creating something new is tough. Stirling is a denominational training college that is attempting to adapt to the challenges of the changing landscape of Christian leadership in Australia, in the context of more traditional thinking.¹ There are many courses of training and development for young leaders across denominations and contexts in Australia, but few if any are attempting to explore the possibilities of integral Christian leadership in non-religious contexts,² and the capacity for this kind of leadership to positively contribute to influencing and transforming culture and society. The goal of this pilot project is to develop a unit of study that engages young students to begin to appreciate, articulate and practice their Christian leadership in the

¹ Menzies and Phelan, *Kingdom Communities*, 45-48.

² Perhaps with the exception of Alphacrucius College who offer broader models of leadership training.

world, and in so doing begin to rebuild a sense of the credible contribution that Christianity can make to the public square of Post-Christian Australia today.³

A key strategy in Stirling's attempt to engage with young Christian leaders was to establish a one-year undergraduate course of study, designed specifically to provide students with an opportunity to investigate various theological, biblical and social issues and explore innovative responses. The course is called Catalyst and is shaped around eight units of study that result in a Diploma of Theology.⁴ The central emphasis of Catalyst is to encourage students towards greater engagement and impact in the world, however in the original course design there was no specific focus on leadership included in the suite of subjects. After running the course for two years, this lack of practical leadership focus emerged as a significant deficiency in the program. As a response a new unit of study entitled Leadership, Formation and Praxis has been designed and implemented, and which is the practical focus of this doctoral project.

This chapter will outline the development of a practical leadership formation unit, couched within the Diploma of Theology (Catalyst) course, designed to involve up to twenty young adult students in a University accredited program that will provide a structure for collective practical experimentation in, and exploration of, Christian leadership in Australia. Firstly the goals of the project will be outlined, followed by the detailed content of the strategy utilized to create the new unit. Finally an overview of the target population and leadership structure will be elaborated. As the author of this project,

³ It is worth noting that that Christianity and religion more broadly has little influence today in public debate in Australia, and the attitude to Christianity is often suspicious or openly hostile. Sheridan, *God is Good For You*, 214.

⁴ Catalyst. "Catalyst." Accessed June 19, 2019, <http://www.catalyst.edu.au>.

I am the chief architect and facilitator of the unit, in active collaboration with other faculty and mentors. The design will also necessarily include input from local and international Christian leaders and entrepreneurs.

Goals of project

As stated, the broad goal of this project is to develop an accredited unit of study, that engages a cohort of young students to begin to appreciate, articulate and practice their Christian leadership in diverse contexts in Australia and the world. The theological basis of the unit is a Kingdom-Centered approach to leadership and implications for emerging leaders. Specifically there are a number of key goals that need articulating as building toward this central goal.

Firstly, a key goal of developing this unit is to listen. Whilst the organising of resources and curriculum has been significant, the design must also create a space for listening to the emerging generation of leaders in order to understand their world. Exploring where student's concepts of leadership have been formed and gauging their views on leadership broadly, and Christian leadership more specifically, is essential in creating a collaborative learning environment that respects, listens and responds. A result of listening well to students is that it can foster the capacity to adapt and develop the unit over time to better respond to areas where information and formation are lacking, as well as to respond to trending cultural challenges and phenomena.

A second goal of the project is to foster in students a new imagination for the purpose and importance of Christian leadership in multiple and diverse contexts. Living in a nation that views Christian faith with a mix of indifference and outright hostility, and

where being politically correct orders much of our social interaction, it is important for young people to appreciate the significant and purposeful place that integral, theologically reflective Christian leaders can have in today's world. Practically this will include facilitating constructive critique of leadership models, dispelling common leadership myths, articulating a Kingdom-focussed theological model for leadership and engaging with profiled Christian leaders and entrepreneurs.

A third significant goal of the project is to introduce students to the nature of formation-based training. One of the features of the unit design is the combination of theory and experimental formation practices which begin to familiarise students with the sustaining rhythms of spiritual discipline, accountable peer-cohort reflection and ultimately the nature of life-long learning. There is often a major emphasis in education on the imparting of knowledge; equally prominent in this unit design is an emphasis on how one is being shaped by God, in dialogue with peers and in practical engagement and experimentation in the real world.

A final goal of designing this unit is that participating students would begin to identify their important contribution to the future of Christian leadership, and to creating positive change, in Australia, and beyond. Students are encouraged to develop skills in integrated reflective practice,⁵ a method that reviews ideas and experiences through theological, spiritual and cultural lenses and then considers implications and future responses. Developing proficiency in theological reflection in young people is an

⁵ Based on various models such as: Judy Brown, *A Leaders Guide to Reflective Practice*, (Bloomington IN: Trafford Publishing, 2008); Kathleen McAlpin, *Ministry That Transforms. A Contemplative Process of Theological Reflection*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2009); Parker Palmer, *Let your life speak: Listening to the voice of Vocation*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

especially important contributor to fostering a deeper sense of purpose, more confident and thoughtful responses and a stronger sense of Christian identity⁶ which is the basis for healthy and sustainable leadership.

Content of strategy

The first stage of this practical project was to collaborate with other members of the Catalyst team and faculty at Stirling to explore the dynamics of the Catalyst course as the teaching context for a new leadership unit. In designing the unit, I took into consideration the original stated purposes of the Catalyst course, as well as feedback from two years of running the course, and the perceived areas that needed rethinking and additional input. From the initial stages of vision and planning the purpose of Catalyst was to educate for social change, “We want our alumni to be leaders in industry who engage in their chosen profession for the distinct purpose of better serving, equipping and empowering ‘the other’.”⁷ A core expectation and stated goal of the course was to engage emerging leaders who are passionate about making a difference in the world,⁸ and yet after two years of facilitation the course lacked an overt focus on leadership formation. As students engaged weekly with a variety of speakers it became evident that there was a lack of integration between what they were learning from these various Christian leaders

⁶ Walker, *The Undefended Leader*, 102-106.

⁷ “Catalyst Vision Document” – Appendix 1

⁸ Stirling Theological College, *Catalyst Handbook*, (Melbourne: Stirling Theological College, 2019), 2.

and entrepreneurs and the broader suite of Catalyst subjects.⁹ Multiple discussions were held to address this perceived deficiency and the natural progression was to begin to creatively develop a new unit that not only suited the Catalyst course, but could also provide a fresh imagination for Christian leadership with young adults more broadly. As well as the need to provide a specifically leadership-focused unit for Catalyst, Stirling was, and is, engaged in a broader strategy to emphasize practical leadership more overtly in teaching and research,¹⁰ and this new unit on leadership is a significant contributor to this strategy.

Having established the need for a new unit focused on leadership, the next task was to create a unit outline that met the requirements of University accreditation as well as creatively articulated a suitably engaging curriculum of study. It was important that the unit expressed in title and overview a sense of integration. The unit was not intended to simply be a theoretical course on Christian leadership, but an integrated approach to theory, practice and formation. The unit was entitled and summarized as follows:

DP1/8002S Leadership Formation and Praxis

Grounded in a practical, theological framework, this unit will enable students to identify and articulate a personal sense of leadership formation. Students will explore key leadership competencies; reflect on the integration of their belief and their behaviour; and communicate their understanding of Christian leadership as they engage with real-world contexts with a focus on promoting positive change in the world. A feature of this unit will be receiving input from a variety of Christian leaders and entrepreneurs. Specific formational issues will be explored such as: understanding influence, transformational spiritual practices, an

⁹ Two units in biblical studies, two units in theology, two immersion units and two reflective practice / practical theology units.

¹⁰ The overt focus on leadership as a subject has increased in the past three years at Stirling, with the development of a number of strategic units of study covering various facets of leadership: “DA9026S Leading People and Teams,” “DA9017S Spiritual and Self Leadership,” “DP2/3/9008S Pastoral Leadership and Congregational Transformation.”

integrated approach to theology and work, resilience and character.¹¹

Whilst designed to fit into the Catalyst course, the breadth of the unit title and outline allows the unit to be taught in more expansive contexts as needed. The unit proposal was sent off for approval by the University's Learning and Teaching Committee, after both an internal and external review by faculty and was affirmed as a well-constructed and excellent unit overall.¹² Once this step was finalized, we were able to publish the unit to be taught and I was able to then develop the specific teaching methodology, curriculum and resources that would accompany the outline.

A feature of Leadership Formation and Praxis (from now on LFandP), is the design to teach it locally rather than centrally. Generally University of Divinity units are designed to be taught on campus or online by the faculty member who has developed and written the unit. In the case of LFandP I am the faculty member who has written the unit and must assess the unit, but a large part of the teaching and input is done by local and international leaders and speakers. The reason for this is that Catalyst is a national course, currently being taught in Perth, with the capacity to be scaled more broadly interstate in the future, as Stirling is the national college of Churches of Christ in Australia.¹³ Campus-based teaching is restricted to a Victorian student base. Online teaching is more broadly accessible, both nationally and internationally, but comes with a somewhat isolated and individualistic learning focus and context. The Catalyst course is intended to

¹¹ For the full outline refer Appendix 2.

¹² This was a summary of the reviewing feedback.

¹³ Stirling Theological College, "About Stirling College," Accessed June 19, 2019, <http://stirling.edu.au/about/about-stirling-college/>.

be taught nationally, in cohorts embedded locally, for example the current student community in central Perth. As a result LFandP was developed with this in mind.

The teaching and learning was to be done both intensively and face-to-face locally over the course of a semester as follows: Intensive Retreat, one and a half days at the beginning of semester; “Hub” sessions, where students meet throughout the semester for face-to-face teaching and learning, six throughout semester. The strategy in running the intensive days was designed to begin the course in a cohort group, allow time for input and allow students the opportunity to bring their thoughts, assumptions and models of leadership with them to be unpacked and explored. As well as this, the students would be introduced to the University of Divinity, expectations and policies and the upcoming semester along with relevant resources and assessments. A further strategy for student connection and engagement was an online resource-base “ARK” that would allow access to resources such as: articles and readings; various media such as YouTube clips; lecture input and summaries of guest speakers, as well as other unit support as necessary.

The development of a rigorous curriculum and drawing together academic and reflective resources was a significant part of the strategy in developing LFandP. What emerged as the focussed curriculum was based on a number of key texts that challenged more traditional ideas about, and models of, leadership. The first of these was Henri Nouwen’s *In The Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. Despite the fact that this book is slightly dated, the leadership temptations that Nouwen articulates resonate powerfully with current and emerging generations of leaders. In seeking to develop a unit that offers some fresh imagination for Christian leadership, it is essential to name and confront some of the complexities and limitations of past ideas on Christian

leadership, and Nouwen does this in a non-judgemental and reorienting way. Not only does he name three powerful temptations of leaders: to be relevant, spectacular and powerful,¹⁴ he offers a new imagination for future Christian leadership that is embedded in formative practices¹⁵ and community reflection. This book emerged as a formative text for students and was included as required reading for a major assessment.

Further books were foundational for building teaching around leadership character as a general topic. David Brook's *The Road to Character* explores the stories of many well-known historical leaders and the nuances of their character formation. N.T. Wright in his book *After You Believe. Why Christian Character Matters*, also explores the importance of character formation in Christian faith and the implications for leadership, health, witness and the future. Each of these texts provided clear scholarship on the importance of formation as a life-long learning process, the fruit of which is seen, for example, in: acts of courage; postures of humility, sacrifice and service; and the potential of creating real change in the world.

Walker's *The Undefended Leader* provided an energetic focus on the importance of leadership identity; Brené Brown's *Dare To Lead*, offered an articulate and creative emphasis on the power of leadership vulnerability. Many more books were included in the full curriculum,¹⁶ and there is an ongoing challenge to locate current resources from an Australian context as they emerge. In seeking to locate the teaching more rigorously in

¹⁴ Nouwen, *In The Name of Jesus*, 27, 51, 73.

¹⁵ In response to the various leadership temptations Nouwen suggests three responsive disciplines: Contemplative Prayer, Confession and Forgiveness and Theological Reflection; *Ibid.*, 42, 64, 85.

¹⁶ Refer Course Outline Appendix 3.

an Australian context, in consultation with the Perth director, the strategy was to draw more intentionally on Australian Christian leaders who could speak to students in Hubs as a significant resource.

As a result of broad reading, and also drawing on years of experience in teaching and consulting with young adults, ministers and leaders, the following topics for the LFandP syllabus emerged. Intensive Days: Demythologizing Leadership; Reflective Practice and Leadership; Biblical Leadership; Christian Leadership for the World; Leadership Identity and Praxis; Leadership Formation Practices.¹⁷ Hub Days: Deep Listening and Leadership; Character and Leadership; Vulnerability and Leadership; Practical Servant Leadership; Integrated Leadership; Transformative Leadership.¹⁸

Part of the integrated strategy in developing LFandP was to provide students with more than just an academic syllabus and accompanying resources. A key to emphasizing the nature of a formation-based unit was to develop formative practices for students to experiment and engage with throughout the course. For each of the topics designated as the focus of a Hub Day, an accompanying Formation Practice was developed. Drawing on and adapting a mixture of established spiritual disciplines, reflective practices, creative biblical engagement and personal discernment exercises, the twenty to thirty minute experiences are designed to invite students to consider how God might be shaping them, deepening them and teaching them in ways that are largely unfamiliar in their day to day lives. For example, the practice of *Stillness Prayer*, based on the work of Mark

¹⁷ Refer Intensive Schedule Appendix 4.

¹⁸ Refer Hub Schedule Appendix 5.

Scandrette,¹⁹ was designed to confront the reality of the quickly shifting, highly distracted dominant culture of young people today, and to invite students to consider the possible challenges and rewards of experimenting in such ways.

A final aspect in the development of the LFandP unit outline was to consider carefully the nature of assessment. As has been repeatedly stated, the unit is designed to be an integrated learning experience and ultimately seeks to encourage integrative thinking as a learning outcome for participants.²⁰ Assessments had to adhere to University expectations, which naturally emphasize written work as the core assessment vehicle. Needing to meet that requirement, it was nonetheless critical to create assessments that had practical implications such as inviting students to: reflect on formation experiences; practically engage with, and follow up, speakers and influencers; experiment with, and critically reflect on real-world experiences of Christian leadership; as well as hone academic articulation.²¹ Added to the accredited assessment of the unit, it was also valuable for students to self-assess. A core strategy to achieve this was writing and disseminating two leadership surveys, one distributed at the beginning of the unit,²² and one in the final week of semester,²³ for students to track their own formation, development and learning.

¹⁹ Scandrette, “Practicing the Way of Jesus – Spiritual Formation Through Shared Group Action,” Lecture notes, 2015.

²⁰ Refer to Unit Outline – Appendix 2. Particularly learning outcome two and four (as it relates to the final integrative essay).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Refer Leadership Survey #1 - Appendix 6.

²³ Refer “Reflecting on Change and Creating Change” – Appendix 7.

In order to complete the unit delivery design and embed an element of the teaching in the broader Australian context, various profiled Christian leaders, influencers and entrepreneurs were needed to speak meaningfully into the course context. My colleague Amit Kharia, one of the original visionary leaders in establishing Catalyst and currently the Catalyst Coordinator in Perth, was instrumental in engaging with and inviting speakers to participate in the Hubs. In consultation with me, Amit facilitated the recruiting of a variety of key Christian leaders for the six Hub days throughout semester.

Target population and leadership

The target audience for this project is a young adult group, aged between seventeen to twenty-eight years old. The group is drawn from local churches, the undergraduate student body of the University of Divinity, as well as various para-church organisations. Whilst the age range of students is potentially ten years, the unit is primarily aimed at engaging with young adult school-leavers, having just graduated from secondary school, and students who have begun tertiary study and have dropped out.²⁴ Many young adults are searching for direction and purpose at this stage of both their personal and faith development, and seeking to gain a deeper understanding of how their church-based faith can contribute purposefully to their various communities, neighbourhood and the wider world.²⁵

²⁴ Commonly referred to as a Gap Year, students are increasingly deferring from university courses or full-time employment after completing secondary school, to travel or experience shorter programs of inspiration and study.

²⁵ Karl Moore, "Millennials Work For Purpose, Not Paycheck," *Forbes*, October 2, 2014, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/karlmoore/2014/10/02/millennials-work-for-purpose-not-paycheck/#7d9d3f706a51>; "Young Adults: Ages 20-25," *Centre on Media and Child Health*, Boston Children's Hospital, accessed June 30, 2019, <http://cmch.tv/parents/young-adults-ages-20-25/>; James

As has been implied so far in outlining the goals and strategic design of this project, a team of people have been involved. Collaboration with colleagues at Stirling and broader networks has been an important part of strategizing and designing the unit LFandP. Two of the key leaders in the process have been Amit Khaira and Josh Bond, who established the original vision and design of Catalyst. Amit and Josh provided the major facilitation of the Catalyst vision, as well as a strategic networking and a mentoring role with students. Their critical feedback has provided some of the impetus for developing a leadership unit of study. Brian Macallum and Angela Sawyer, along with myself, developed the teaching curriculum for the Catalyst course, and continue to monitor ongoing academic achievement and pedagogy.

As the architect of LFandP as a pilot training unit for young adults, I function as the principal developer, presenter, facilitator and assessor of the unit. This has included the development of all Hub topics and input content, readings and formative practice exercises. The delivery of this content in the six Hub sessions throughout semester has been facilitated by the Perth coordinator Amit Kharia, and further teaching was delivered by the following guest lecturers: Ben and Pip O'Meara from *Power to Empower*, Scott Vawser from *Mission Australia*, Hayden Glass from *Red Frogs*, Jon Owen from *Wayside Chapel*, Jeremy Chetty from *Student Edge*, Michael Pailthorpe from *Sports Chaplaincy Australia*, Peter Barney CEO SU Western Australia.

Whilst the development and the delivery of LFandP has been a collaborative process, mainly directed by me, it is one of the long-term goals of Catalyst broadly, and

Fowler, *Stages of Faith. The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 174-183.

LFandP more specifically, that the pilot population of students will potentially be future leaders of and presenters in the course. The University of Divinity requires faculty to oversee and direct the teaching and assessment of study units, but this does not limit the contribution of alumni who have been positively impacted and shaped by their studies. The testimony of past students is a valuable resource for recruiting and encouraging new participants in the future.

This chapter has given a detailed outline of the goals and strategies of this doctoral project. Taking into consideration some of the limitations of more traditional models of Christian leadership training, the design of a new unit of study: *Leadership, Formation and Praxis* was proposed as an attempt at creatively reimagining Christian leadership for young Australians. Integrating a combination of academic rigour, contemporary resources, formative practices and diverse leadership input, the ultimate goal of this new unit of study is to equip young Christian leaders to appreciate, articulate and practice their Christian leadership in diverse contexts in Australia and the world. The following chapter will address the implementation of this project and evaluate the resulting strengths and growth areas of the strategy.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES

The implementation for a new unit of study takes time and has specific stages. This chapter will outline the timeline of the project as well as the various stages of development and facilitation. This chapter will also evaluate the pilot project, based on a combination of assessment tasks, survey tools, and collegial and student feedback. There will be attention given to the unique limitations of assessing a unit of study in the “short term,” acknowledging that the scope of the success of this project may not be accurately measured until years into the future as students integrate their learning and action in vocational contexts.

Timeline

The timeline for the new unit occurred in three distinctive phases and spanned a period of approximately sixteen months from February 2018 through to June 2019. Phase one was the *pre-course phase* which included the administrative work, writing the academic syllabus, building a resource base and the development of the online learning environment for the new unit. The second phase was the *course facilitation phase* which involved student engagement, facilitating the pilot intensive days, lecturing, working with the Perth facilitator to deliver teaching locally, ongoing development of Hub input,

updating online resources, student engagement, feedback and assessment. The final phase was the *assessment and evaluation phase* which included the academic assessment of students, evaluation of learning and integration through survey tools, feedback from students and the Perth facilitator as well as anecdotal feedback.

The pre-course phase took approximately one year beginning in February 2018. The initial thought and vision for a new unit on leadership was considered to be a significant addition to the Catalyst Diploma of Theology, which was discussed in the Catalyst team meeting in late February 2018, prior to the commencement of the academic year. The meeting focus was both a review of the past teaching year of Catalyst as well as an opportunity to consider new vision and changes for coming years. It was impossible to facilitate a new unit for 2018, due to University procedures and protocols in unit approval,¹ and therefore 2019 became the target year for the pilot project to be initiated.

During April and May 2018 a clear proposal for the new unit was developed for the directors of Catalyst and teaching colleagues to consider. This process was complemented by undertaking the Fuller Theological Seminary course “Developing the Doctoral Project Proposal”² which gave a rigorous and clear framework for the emerging vision for this new unit. In June 2018 the completed proposal was distributed via email to the Catalyst team and the Stirling Principal for discussion, feedback and approval to submit the unit for University accreditation.

After an internal review by two members of faculty at Stirling and an external

¹ University of Divinity, “Unit Policy,” accessed June 25, 2019, <https://divinity.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Unit-Policy.pdf>.

² Kurt Fredrickson and Randy Rowland, “DM 710 Developing the Doctoral Project Proposal,” (Fuller Theological Seminary, March 26-June 8, 2018), 1- 6.

review by the Academic Dean at Trinity College Theological School the unit was submitted to the University of Divinity's Academic Board. In August 2018 the unit was formally approved and published in September for teaching in 2019. Following approval, the first draft of the full unit outline and topical syllabus took shape in October 2018.³ The original intention was to teach LFandP in second semester 2019, however due to staff changes, feedback from students in 2018 and what appeared to be a more streamlined course design of subjects the timetable was changed in November 2018, to teach the unit in first semester commencing late February 2019.⁴

November 2018 saw the opening of enrolments for Stirling units of study for 2019, and a more intentional focus on recruitment of students. All graduating year twelve student results in Australia are published in December each year,⁵ and this becomes a critical point at which many school-leavers make decisions about their various study options. This was the time when the Catalyst directors, Josh Bond and Amit Khaira, as well as the Stirling registrar were most actively responding to student interest in courses of study. Catalyst as a Stirling “product” is advertised primarily through a website and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.⁶ In addition, Catalyst was

³ Refer Unit Outline Appendix 2.

⁴ Past students were indicating an ongoing interest in leadership and the interface of Christian leadership and their workplaces as well as their churches. We also wanted to give future students resources, tools and inspiration to frame their Catalyst year as an intentional step into Christian leadership, with the freedom to learn, reflect, discern and experiment with this as their backdrop. This aligned more closely with the original vision presented in, Amit Khaira and Josh Bond, “Catalyst Vision Document”, 2016.

⁵ “Year 12 Results and ATAR Release Dates,” *Better Education Forum*, accessed June 25, 2019, http://bettereducation.com.au/forum/yaf_postst3969_Year-12-results-and-ATAR-release-dates.aspx.

⁶ Catalyst Website: www.catalyst.org.au; Instagram page: https://www.instagram.com/catalyst_course/; Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/catalystcourseAU/>

advertised and promoted at various events including the VCE and Careers Expo and SHIFT Ministry and Mission Expo. Past students were invited to speak to school groups, at expos as well as articulate something of their experience in print media such as the Catalyst prospectus, Stirling Student Bulletin and online media platforms. Contact data collected from potential students, emails and phone numbers, was followed up in December 2018 through to February 2019, which proved to be the key recruitment and enrolment phases.

The first two months of 2019 saw the finalising of LFandP for teaching and the design of the pilot intensive schedule of teaching.⁷ Enrolments were settled, and dates were confirmed for the Perth student orientation day - 19th February, and the LFandP intensive - 25th – 26th February 2019. Finally, in this first phase of implementation, the online resources were updated and made available to students,⁸ and the initial unit-based contact with students was made, via email, in the week prior to the LFandP intensive.

Teaching: Leadership, Formation and Praxis

The first stage of implementing the teaching of LFandP was the pilot day and a half intensive retreat 25th-26th February 2019. The central goals of this intensive time of study were to introduce students to a formative framework of teaching for the semester ahead, ascertain student assumptions, perceptions and basic understanding about leadership and to deliver input on key foundational leadership topics. Students were each

⁷ Refer Intensive Schedule – Appendix 4.

⁸ Refer ARK Online Resource Screen shot – Appendix 8.

given access to online resources for the unit and to the “Intensive Outline,”⁹ prior to the first intensive and all except one student arrived on time ready to begin at 9.00am.

The cohort had twelve participants, each with a Christian background, from a variety of denominational and ethnic contexts.¹⁰ The class commenced with a brief devotional time, followed by a personal introduction to my context, beliefs and why I was initiating this unit with them.¹¹ Following this introduction students were each given a leadership survey to complete,¹² which would form a point of reference in the teaching input as it addressed various assumptions, models of leadership and broad understanding of Christian leadership. The survey was administered through the familiar medium of *Google Forms* and students were able to respond digitally to questions. The remainder of the day was spent in class time exploring the following topics: *Demythologizing Leadership* – understanding concepts, stereotypes and exploring the relationship between leadership and influence; *Reflective Practice and Leadership* – introducing students to action - reflection models and theological reflection as integral tools for leadership; *Biblical Leadership* – unpacking traditional models, biblical texts and presenting a Kingdom-Centred model; *Christian Leadership for the World* – introducing students to a new imagination, everyday contexts and scenarios for credible leadership influence. This

⁹ Refer Intensive Schedule – Appendix 4.

¹⁰ Including: Karen Refugee Community, District Alliance Church, Uniting Church, Salvation Army, ACC, Baptist Church, Churches of Christ and Independent Pentecostal.

¹¹ The backdrop of this introduction was based on Simon Sinek, *Start with Why. How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*. (London, Penguin Group, 2009).

¹² Refer Leadership Survey #1 – Cohort 2019 – Appendix 6 or for the digital version: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf0uJe8gAdihZsA-oK3i9nRglGrUqBJdd8QTA0abKjIH0nSGw/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1>.

first day was a rich and engaged time of interaction and learning. My lecturing style is very relational and down-to-earth. I enjoy robust dialogue and challenging students to critically think about their default assumptions and responses. For new tertiary students this can be a lot of fun. It is also an opportunity for Christian young people to freely give expression to ideas, and respectfully dialogue with quite differing beliefs and views in a moderated environment. During the breaks that were scheduled throughout the day three specific students were eager to discuss ideas further, ask more questions, each expressing a genuine enthusiasm for the topics and themes that were emerging.

Day two of the intensive centred more on the elements of formation and practice. *Leadership Identity and Praxis* and *Leadership Formation (practices)* were the topics of the morning, and both topics invited students to consider the practical and experimental dimensions of their learning and ultimately their leadership. Students were able to articulate the kinds of leaders they thought they were, the narratives and influences that shape them and the voices they listen to. The day finished with students exploring the idea of spiritual discipline as formation in their leadership and an introduction to some practical experiments for them to undertake as Catalyst unfolded for the year. In the week following the intensive, the cohort was scheduled to travel to Thailand for ten days on a learning and exposure experience. This was the context for their first formative discipline experiment of journaling and deep listening. Students have repeatedly reflected on the valuable and sustaining skills of reflective practice, journaling and listening, in the context of such “out of comfort zone” experiences.

A final aspect of the teaching time in Perth was to offer students a clear picture of University expectations. Tertiary study is different from secondary school, and this

transition for young people is sometimes challenging. Completing assessments according to guidelines, being able to clearly communicate and take responsibility for their own learning and formation as “adults” in education are concepts that take time for young people to develop.

My time in Perth was also an opportunity to facilitate a teaching meeting with the Perth facilitator and my colleague, Amit Khaira. The teaching meeting took place on Monday 25th February at the conclusion of the teaching day. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the upcoming Hub days that Amit would facilitate in my absence. For teaching to be done locally there are implications for personnel to be well-resourced and prepared, which is part of my responsibility as the primary teaching faculty. A similar type of meeting would ideally be delivered with multiple state facilitators should the course be scaled more broadly interstate in the future. We discussed the timetable of Hub days throughout the upcoming semester, the various speakers who would be giving input, opportunities for integrative learning, Hub topics, resources and my expectations of the facilitation of input and formation practices. The unit and accompanying subject matter was brand new and so there was a commitment between Amit and I to collaborate further, as needed throughout semester via phone or video chat.

After an energising intensive in Perth, I returned to Melbourne to continue developing the resources for Hub sessions. There were a total of six Hub sessions timetabled for the remaining weeks of the semester, each with a specific speaker and topical focus for the Tuesday mornings. The Hub weeks were interspersed throughout the semester with the immersion trip, two other intensive weeks for different subject units

and weeks for mid-semester break.

Each of the six Hub days had a specific timetable for the morning, which allowed an hour for the guest speaker to share and teach, an hour for topical input, half an hour for formation practices and short breaks for refreshments. The afternoon was then allocated for other Catalyst-related tasks and general student collaboration or study. My responsibility was to deliver clear, engaging input with enough information to rigorously tackle the topic, whilst also allowing enough flexibility to enable local “flavour” to be included. A biblical emphasis in the teaching was also vital in grounding the various topics theologically. Each week biblical texts were allocated for reflection, interpretation and integration into the themes of leadership being explored. Additionally it was important to connect with students creatively, utilising various media to provoke thinking, stimulate discussion and facilitate greater engagement.¹³ Each week the input included such resources as: visual aids, YouTube clips, Ted Talks, popular music, trending social issues and topical reading.

A final aspect of the six Hub sessions was the time allocated for formation practices. This aspect of the Hub was an opportunity for students to be guided in experimenting with various types of spiritual disciplines. Some of the practices were familiar, for example meditating on Scripture, and some were very foreign to students,

¹³ The emerging generation of University students are more interested than ever in blended learning environments, accessing information and resources digitally as well as having the freedom to engage with a preferred learning style. Reference: Patricia Glasby, “Future Trends in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education,” Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation, University of Queensland, November 2015, 17-20; Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice*, (Jackson, TN: Ingram Publisher Services, 2006).

for example stillness prayer and peditation.¹⁴ Students were provided with an outline of the time, including any biblical reflection, reflective questions, experimental ideas and activities. All the resources that were developed for the Hubs, including: lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, media files, articles, links and formation practices were made available online for students to access and to ultimately build a depository of resources for ongoing utilisation.

Assessment and Evaluation

As the semester progressed it was clear that LFandP was finding a familiar rhythm with students and teachers. The integration of topics with the various guest speakers was quite powerful as was the ongoing reflection from students about their learning and formation through various assessments. It was also clear that some of the challenges of tertiary study were taking their toll as students struggled with various aspects of the study too and the discovery that formation was a concept that required discipline – something reasonably foreign to the majority of participants.¹⁵

In evaluating the merits of this pilot unit of study it is significant to take into consideration the stated goals that formed the basis for the project. The first broadly stated goal was to create a new and engaging unit of accredited study for a young adult demographic that encouraged specific learning outcomes in regard to Christian leadership, that could be taught locally. This was a resounding success. The unit was

¹⁴ Peditation is the practice of walking while praying. For a full list of the formation practices see Appendix 5.

¹⁵ The primary evidence of this was reflections from the Perth facilitator on student responses to various formative experiments and challenges in our final teaching meeting 12 June, 2019.

received and approved by the University of Divinity as an excellent unit and a positive contribution to the strategic goals of the University generally, and more specifically the future directions of Stirling. Academic resources, assessment tasks and teaching methodology were all considered to be of a rigorous and engaging quality that fully adhered to higher education standards.¹⁶ Whilst the merit of the unit was good on paper, what is ultimately much more significant is whether student engagement and learning outcomes reflected the four earlier stated specific goals.¹⁷

A key goal of the project was to listen to young adults to discover something of their understanding and views on Christian leadership in order to discover what might be most useful in teaching and forming them for Australian society today. A key tool used to achieve this was the Leadership Survey administered at the beginning of the unit. A sample of the information I sought included questions such as: What is your one sentence definition of leadership? Define the difference between an effective leader and an effective Christian leader. What do you consider to be the most important result of Christian leadership? List some characters from the Bible who you see as models of Christian leadership (and why). In addition to such general questions, students were given the opportunity to rank the importance of various elements of leadership including leadership qualities and competencies, essential resources and acceptable contexts in which to exercise Christian leadership.

These questions provided a platform for students to express their basic responses

¹⁶ Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011, “Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015,” October 7, 2015, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639>.

¹⁷ See pages 95-97

and provided a good impression of some of their assumptions and defaults as well as characteristics that they admired, resources that they thought would be useful and some interesting information about the types of characteristics that were significant to them in Christian leadership. One of the most interesting discoveries from the survey was what students valued and admired in terms of leadership. The most highly ranked leadership qualities were honesty and purpose; and the most highly ranked competencies of leaders were listening and interpersonal skills. Interestingly students ranked as the least important competencies of a leader self-care and a vigorous work ethic – which is cause for some concern and has implications for ongoing teaching development.

A core finding from the survey was in regard to how this younger generation view more traditional models of leadership. The leadership styles and characteristics most valued and sought after are overtly relational as opposed to controlling or managerial, and the most valued resources for emerging leaders ranked in the survey were mentors and the ability to be actively involved in leadership. These responses resonate with much of the research in regard to the emerging generation of young people who are generally suspicious of the more controlling, less relational and hierarchical models of leadership. Despite this a number of students defaulted to the idea that a Christian leader is the one “upfront” with “all the answers” and knowledge.

The survey was an important tool for students to have a voice. In response I incorporated many of the findings into the ensuing class discussions. It was great to explore topics such as Biblical Leadership in class with the survey in the background, which revealed that students main model of biblical leadership was Jesus, followed by Moses and Paul, with two students worryingly unsure what biblical characters

represented models of leadership. Not only was I able to respond to students' ideas and perceptions in the intensive, the survey became a vital basis for framing some of what was taught in the six Hub sessions.

A second stated goal for the LFandP was to foster a new imagination for Christian leadership that pushed beyond the church or the mission organization. One of the questions in the survey asked students to rank in order what they believe are the most acceptable contexts in which to exercise Christian leadership. Ten out of eleven respondents said the local church, followed closely by five out of eleven responding an NGO.¹⁸ Other contexts listed in the survey included: workplace, university, local kindergarten, coaching sport and volunteering at a soup kitchen.

A fascinating movement emerged as the semester of teaching unfolded. Students began to see more clearly a broader context for Christian leadership to be exercised. Aside from specifically exploring readings and discussion in this area, the most transformative element in shifting student imaginations was the speakers that shared in the Hubs. One of the assessment tasks for the unit was to complete a Leadership Engagement Report that focused on the various speakers and leaders that students encountered throughout semester. Of the students who submitted the report, every one affirmed the value of the different speaker's stories in broadening their understanding of Christian leadership. One student wrote, "The most helpful thing that I have encountered in my journey is the leaders who have experience in the real world who came to talk as guest speakers in our class. They inspired me, have encouraged me and set an example

¹⁸ Referring to a non-governmental organization or commonly a not-for-profit organisation – charity, missional group etc.

for me.”¹⁹ Further evidence of this shift in imagination was indicated in the final student survey administered in May 2019,²⁰ with students responding to the question: What are the contexts in which you would like to explore Christian leadership in the future? Responses included: politics, community neighborhood, social work, the way our nation is being shaped, camping and chaplaincy.

The contextual question of Christian leadership was significant to explore with the cohort, however a further aspect of developing a new imagination for Christian leadership was exploring models of leadership and the implied characteristics. If Christian leadership can be exercised in a variety of non-religious contexts, then the character of leaders in these places is vitally important. The theological basis of LFandP is a Kingdom-centered model. In crafting this unit on such a theological model it was essential to teach and highlight the characteristics of a leader who embodies a Kingdom approach to leadership. For example, Jesus modelled characteristics such as humility, vulnerability, deep listening, servanthood, integrity, love and influence in his public representation of the Kingdom of God. Exploring these leadership characteristics topically in the course, and inviting speakers to reflect on various characteristics from their stories, was a core part of building a new imagination for Christian leadership.

Students responded very positively to the characteristics explored. In their final responses and assessments the majority of students reflected on changes in their understanding of Christian leadership characteristics. One student summarizes this

¹⁹ Student response in “Leadership Engagement Report” assessment, 2019.

²⁰ Refer final student questionnaire “Reflecting on Change and Creating Change” – Appendix 7.

particularly well: “I’ve always understood a leader as a person who has all the authority and someone who likes to be in charge of things. After digging deep, I’ve realized a leader is someone who would wash the feet of the people they are leading . . .”²¹ I am confident that a shift in the majority of student thinking occurred throughout the semester, but perhaps it is only a glimpse of what could be. A more accurate assessment of the shaping of student imagination must surely emerge in the coming years of practical application, decision making, vocational pursuit and ongoing formation.

Another goal of the pilot project was to introduce students to formation-based training and invite students to reflect on how God is shaping them through experiences, practices and their learning. This proved to be the most challenging aspect of the unit for the majority of students. Students entered the course with a relatively rudimentary understanding of the notion of spiritual formation. Most students related formation to a general sense of reading the Bible and having a good, growing relationship with God. A more specific sense of how these things become formative, requiring time and discipline, was largely absent from their thinking. Whilst spiritual disciplines are nothing new, it seems that for this cohort of students, living with many of the generational complexities and cultural narratives outlined in Chapter 2, the skills of theological reflection and the formation practices were very foreign to them, and alarmingly had not apparently been modelled to them in discernible ways.²²

²¹ Student response in “Reflecting on Change and Creating Change” survey, 2019.

²² This observation came from the Perth facilitator in our final teaching meeting of semester. When he asked students to think of leaders in their churches and communities that modelled a commitment to spiritual formation and discipline students struggled to find examples to share. Students also reflected some of the challenging nature of reflection and formation in their assessments and survey responses.

One of the ways to measure student understanding of, and engagement in, the formation process was a final integrative essay. The essay asked students to reflect personally on a number of key aspects of their semester including: “how you have been shaped by various experiences, influential voices (speakers, writers etc.) over the past semester. . . and what formative disciplines / patterns have helped shape you and why?”²³ Responses varied with most reporting a degree of encouragement and effort in trying to be more intentional devotionally, for example reading the Bible and prayerfulness. Some wrote about the positive impact of formation, “I have taken on some practices that I had not previously undertaken and have seen a visible change in my day to day life.”²⁴ Other students openly admitted to struggling with disciplines and not practicing any at all throughout semester. The results were quite mixed in the end, however this should not be a discouragement. As already stated, a more robust nature of the impact of this unit on students will take some time to emerge, and the fact that young emerging leaders have been pragmatically introduced to interesting and new ideas about spiritual discipline and the value of life-long learning is in itself a positive foundation, on which much can be built in the future.

The final articulated goal for the project was to encourage students to understand the valuable contribution they can make, as young Christians, to creating positive change in our world. In the beginning a number of students expressed levels of self-doubt and general self-consciousness as they reflected on their own personal sense of leadership. In

²³ Refer Appendix 3.

²⁴ Student response in “Integrative Essay” assessment, 2019.

addition almost half of the students indicated that they felt a hesitancy about their leadership impact based on lack of knowledge. There were also a few students who did not really see themselves as leaders, due to being quieter in personality and perhaps less “upfront,” although members of their communities affirmed them as leaders. With this backdrop it was a significant goal to help students build confidence in their potential for leadership and inspire them to become change-makers in the world. One of the specific ways this subject was addressed was to help students identity their gifts, passions and causes,²⁵ as well as affirming models of leadership such as the vulnerable leader and the servant leader, which helped students who inhabit a less charismatic or “upfront” style of leadership to still see themselves as potential leaders.

It is difficult to really evaluate the outcomes of this learning goal. A number of students were clear in their final reflections in regard to their interest and passion for becoming change-makers and taking action in emerging areas of passion and purpose, whilst others were still wrestling with personal and spiritual issues. Ultimately I have confidence that a firm and encouraging foundation was laid for students to see the positive and vital contribution that Christian young people can make to Australia today. There were multiple opportunities for students to see themselves as leaders, affirmed in their diversity of interests and gifts, mentored in a formation program designed to shape and deepen knowledge, spirituality, reflective capacity and practical engagement and exploration. In addition a powerful gift from many of the visiting speakers that

²⁵ Both the intensive as well as Hubs allowed space for this. Particularly the formation exercise “Identifying My Cause” offered students an intentional framework for reflection and collaboration in this area.

participated in the Hubs was their genuine interest to invest more time and energy into our students as mentors and resources as needed.²⁶

In this final evaluation it needs to be acknowledged that the demands of tertiary studies, coupled with the hectic day to day lives of young adults proved to be a complex load for a minority of students. Any full-time course of study is arduous, and Catalyst is no exception. In reflecting on the efficacy of the unit LFandP, three out of the twelve students did not actually pass the academic requirements of the course, generally failing to communicate effectively and take responsibility for their learning. Each of these students have appreciated the experience of Catalyst, the teaching, the mentoring and the cohort-based learning opportunity. With the exception of one student who has lingering health problems all have expressed a desire to continue with Catalyst, although they might re-evaluate ongoing academic involvement.²⁷

In the final teaching meeting held 12th June 2019, the Perth facilitator and I reviewed the unit and affirmed the design and the learning outcomes, and also acknowledged some of the areas that needed extra work in the future. Amit's leadership and teaching of the unit locally proved to be a minor challenge to me personally but was for the most part excellent. His commitment to caring for and mentoring students, combined with a natural charisma and passion for the topic proved to be a vital part of

²⁶ Many speakers who contributed to the course have offered to mentor and connect further with students in areas of interest and passion as students continue their learning journey.

²⁷ Students who are willing to forgo credit for a unit of study are able to audit units, which means they can enjoy a full learning experience without the anxiety or expectation of assignment submission.

student's positive experience of the unit.²⁸ My personality tends towards wanting to control information and environments, and my long experience in teaching also contributes to my levels of preparation or lack thereof. When designing a unit of study to be taught by a third party I found myself on occasion in varying states of frustration and begrudging admiration, when elements of input and organization differed from my defaults. This was a good reflective and formative discipline for me personally and has, I believe, helped me to be a more organized and accountable teacher.

²⁸ Overwhelmingly students who have made a journey of study with Amit reflect on the impact of his care, wisdom and leadership in their experience of study.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper has outlined the need for Stirling to continue to creatively imagine what Christian leadership can look like in a nation that is increasingly disinterested and antagonistic toward a representation of Christian faith in the public sphere of Australian life today. In addition, an adaptive and innovative approach to Christian leadership training, that emphasizes Kingdom-oriented leadership, spiritual formation and practical engagement, has been outlined as a unique and necessary response the problem. The world no longer views members of the clergy as automatically worthy of trust and respect, and generally most local expressions of denominational church community, with few exceptions are declining in both attendance and community reach. When most models of Christian leadership have largely been associated with institutional religious contexts and the chief method of training Christian leaders has been seminary-based courses for vocational ministry, the Church is ultimately faced with fewer Christians intentionally equipped to represent the good news of God's kingdom in the broader contexts of their everyday life and work.

Each morning digital news feeds are filled with stories of injustice, deep need, polarized world-views and the complex issues of fear facing many nations today. Mixed in with these stories are the insistent and insidious snapshots of advertising conglomerates pressing viewers ever deeper into places of discontent, and the determinedly digital communication platforms of popular culture regularly inviting consumers to a superficial and contrived sense of connection and personal identity. The clarion call to action for the Church is to consider anew a rapidly changing world, as Guder asserts, "under the guidance of the Word of God the church must constantly

experience re-shaping, re-forming.”²⁹ Whilst this seems obvious, it is not always easy. Usually, when the Church faces change and challenge, the fear-fueled response is disorientation and confusion, “we instinctively . . . look for ways to protect ourselves by resisting change and trying to recover what feels lost”³⁰ rather than step boldly and imaginatively into new spaces.³¹ Followers of the way of Jesus are inherently called to embody the hope of the Kingdom of God in their everyday living, working and relating. To restore a sense of credibility, to build trust and ultimately to make space for the possibilities of transformation and salvation, an unpretentious type of Christian leader is needed in Australia today. In the footsteps of Jesus, grounded in a healthy Kingdom theology, young people today are being invited to consider their unique and vital contribution as Christian leaders, influencers and change-makers, being taught and shaped in a formative cohort that aspires towards embodying hope, inclusive love, dogged grace, and insistent good news - which has the potential to change hearts, lives, workplaces, sporting clubs . . . the world. This vision is the driving force behind the work in this doctoral project.

Stirling, in collaboration with the University of Divinity, is well placed to respond significantly to this problem and to experiment purposefully with contemporary ways of training the emerging generations for credible and engaged Christian leadership in

²⁹ Darryl Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 150.

³⁰ Alan J. Roxburgh, *The Sky is Falling. Leaders Lost in Transition*, (Eagle, Idaho: ACI Publishing, 2005), 43.

³¹ Alan Roxburgh, *Structured for Mission. Renewing the Culture of the Church*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 148-156.

Australia. The history of Churches of Christ, the movement which Stirling represents in ethos and practice, provides a dynamic historical backdrop for this task. A defining feature of the beginnings of the movement known as Churches of Christ was the willingness to respond and adapt to the cultural complexities of the time in which the movement was born. As the inestimable Williams asserts, "Originality calls for readiness to re-think, re-state and re-orientate in the light of changing conditions and situations. Our movement was born because pioneers found difficulties, raised questions and presented new ideas."³² Now is the time to meaningfully and practically embrace such creative and imaginative spaces anew.

Recent news cycles have been particularly galvanizing for much of the theological and practical emphasis of this project. Football superstar Israel Folau and his controversial sacking by Rugby Australia after posting an edited, inflammatory excerpt of Scripture (Gal 5:19-21)³³ on social media has dominated news in recent weeks.³⁴ This has hit a nerve with more conservative believers, who have rallied behind him with financial and social media support as he is seen to represent issues regarding religious freedom in

³² E L Williams, *A Biblical Approach to Unity*, (Melbourne: Austral Printing and Publishing Company, 1957), 11.

³³ Folau's post said "Warning. Drunks, homosexuals, adulterers, liars, fornicators, thieves, atheists, idolaters. Hell awaits you. Repent. Only Jesus saves." Translations of this text do not actually mention homosexuals or in fact hell.

³⁴ For examples of reports refer to "Israel Folau to be Sacked by Rugby Australia Over Homophobic Comments," *ABC/AAP*, April 11, 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-11/israel-folau-set-to-be-sacked-by-rugby-australia/10993856>; John Sinnott, "Israel Folau Sacked Following Anti-gay Social Media Post," *CNN*, May 17, 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/05/17/sport/israel-folau-spt-intl/index.html>.

Australia.³⁵ Folau represents a fascinating case study into much of what this doctoral project is about. Firstly it highlights the complex nature of social media communication that apparently justifies a poor and out of context use of Scripture and one-sided communication. Folau, a well-known Christian sportsman, has justified his actions as the responsibility of a Christian leader to speak the truth of the Bible and that it was all “done in love.”³⁶ The results of his actions and words seem to have produced nothing but conflict, controversy and polarization. As a vehicle for exercising Christian leadership influence in his work-place, posting a provocative adaptation of the Bible on social media, targeting specific individuals, seems a particularly irresponsible way of “speaking truth.” Disengaged, one-sided and almost cowardly, this type of “proclamation” looks very little like Jesus’ embodiment of the Kingdom of God, which was to proclaim good news. The embodiment of the Spirit of God, according to Galatians 5 results in “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Gal 5:22-23)

Once again, the many, many people of faith who are not represented by the views of Israel Folau, and who are simply occupied with being humble, listening, loving, graceful folk in their neighborhoods, have to work even harder to look into the tired and saddened eyes of those on the receiving end of such unfiltered words and continue to

³⁵ Geoff Thompson, “Israel Folau and his Crowdfunding Campaign Is Dividing Opinion Among Christians,” *ABC News*, June 26, 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-06-26/israel-folau-fundraise-australian-christian-lobby-court-case/11244714>.

³⁶ Viki Gerova, “Israel Folau Posted Anti-Gay Message 'Out Of Love', Defends Family,” *Network 10, 10 Daily*, May 5, 2019, <https://10daily.com.au/news/australia/a190505moapf/israel-folau-posted-anti-gay-message-out-of-love-defends-family-20190505>; Jamie Pandaram, “Love, Not Malice: Israel Folau Stands His Ground,” *The Australian*, July 10, 2019, <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/sport/rugby-union/love-not-malice-israel-folau-stands-his-ground/news-story/f6c7c03b39dd287527f398f70f5789d2>.

express the unconditional love of a God of grace. This is the very real-world context in which young adults today are living and learning. The challenge is to provide alternate voices, stories and experiences of Christian leaders that have pushed beyond the traditional contexts and are creating positive change in the world. It is vital that emerging leaders are trained and encouraged to demonstrate Christian leadership in this midst of such debates without defaulting to reactionary outrage and judgment, and embodying love and grace that extends even to the ignorant and callous. The unit that was designed and taught this past semester provided a rich and robust resource of alternate voices and mentors. The teaching was centered on building a contemporary, formative, theologically and biblically-based understanding of Kingdom leadership, but will consistently need revision in the future to respond meaningfully to trending cultural challenges and to experiment with formation and integration in even more practical and engaging ways.

While the results were perhaps not overwhelming, there were multiple indications that positive and sustainable changes were taking place in the minds and hearts of young people. The fuller sense of the impact of this project is still yet to come, as has already been acknowledged. As students graduate and explore vocation, decision making, travel and maturing, the real fruit of this unit of study will be revealed and evaluated. An active Catalyst and Stirling alumni are integral in the ongoing sharing of stories and the impact of formation and learning on students, and it will be interesting to assess more of this in the years to come.

In conclusion, more work and research into this area is needed. More leaders are required to speak and make manifest practical, credible Christian leadership in diverse contexts. There are still many communities and individuals who simply cannot

comprehend the idea of Christian leadership outside the church, the results of which are not simply measured in terms of conversions and commitments. The words of the late, great Jean Vanier resonate powerfully in such times as these, “we have to remind ourselves, constantly that we are not saviors. We are simply a tiny sign, among thousands of others, that love is possible,”³⁷ and if young leaders today can live into that ideal, we will see trust, hope and grace restored, and the chances for deepening respect, credible contribution, profound influence and community transformation will be exceedingly promising.

³⁷ Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 312.

APPENDIX 1

CATALYST VISION DOCUMENT

MOTTO

Education for Social Change.

VISION

To challenge, equip, and expose others to experiences that will impact the way they view, interact and serve their communities.

MISSION

Resource and empower participants with the tools necessary to become difference makers within their communities and beyond.

RATIONALE

Our faith motivates us to serve us within our community and beyond.

WHY

We see the need to create an educational movement that is unique and provides a space for young people to become change makers. Many of our future leaders fail to understand the relationship between faith, calling and vocation, often separating each from the other. We believe that all three elements work together in synergy.

The current formula within an educational context is to go through the theory components and then provide an opportunity for students to put into practice what they have learnt. Our intention is to expose participants to the current realities in a variety of contexts from the earliest point, and have these experiences dictate the content we then engage in. This sets in place the cycle of PRAXIS we pride ourselves in; constant action and reflection.

END GOAL

We want participants to become better “readers and interpreters” of culture and society, equipping them to not only participate in traditional solutions, but to have the capacity to create new, innovative models.

We want our alumni to be leaders in industry who engage in their chosen profession for the distinct purpose of better serving, equipping and empowering “the other”.

MEASURE

Our participants create social change and impact their communities.

Prepared by Amit Khaira and Josh Bond

APPENDIX 2

UNIT OUTLINE

DP 1/8002S Leadership Formation & Praxis (Unit Outline)

Grounded in a practical, theological framework, this unit will enable students to identify and articulate a personal sense of leadership formation. Students will explore key leadership competencies; reflect on the integration of their belief and their behaviour; and communicate their understanding of Christian leadership as they engage with real-world contexts with a focus on promoting positive change in the world. A feature of this unit will be receiving input from a variety of Christian leaders and entrepreneurs. Specific formational issues will be explored such as: understanding influence, transformational spiritual practices, an integrated approach to theology and work, resilience and character.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, it is expected that students will be able to:

1. Articulate self-learning goals and objectives to achieve these goals.
2. Outline core aspects which impact the way in which belief and behaviour are integrated in credible Christian leadership
3. Evaluate a range of personal and theological perspectives on leadership, influence, and creating change.
4. Articulate a theologically coherent understanding of leadership formation.
5. Critically evaluate current scholarship in the area of leadership formation (Postgraduate)

Delivery

Intensive – 1/2 day intensive in Feb/March
Weekly - Tuesday Hub (peer group interaction)

Faculty:

Penny Martin

Assessment (Undergraduate)

2 x 500 word leadership reports 30% (15% each)
1 x 1000 word reading report and response 30%
1 x 1500 word integrative essay 40%

Assessment (Postgrad)

2 x 750 word leadership reports 30% (15% each)
1 x 1500 word reading report and response 30%
1 x 3000 word integrative essay 40%

Bibliography

* = set texts recommended for purchase

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Nouwen, H. *In The Name of Jesus. Reflections on Christian Leadership*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002.

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Walker, Simon P. *Leading Out of Who You Are. Discovering The Secret of Undefended Leadership*, Carlisle: Piquant Editions Ltd., 2007.

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APPENDIX 3

DP1/8002S – COURSE OUTLINE 2019

Intensive Details: Monday 25th February 9am-4pm
Tuesday 26th February 9am-12pm

ARK:

Log on to ARK and find your way to the unit's page. Links to resources and readings will be there, as well as a list of Hub sessions and topics running throughout the semester. There will also be the expectations and assessments that will form a vital part of your engagement with the unit.

Please make yourself familiar with the site and avail yourself of the resources regularly as it is all intended to enrich your experience and understanding.

If you do not know how to log in to ARK you will find instructions at:

www.stirling.edu.au/tams

Course Expectations:

Attendance:

It is expected that you will attend the intensive days in February for all sessions as well as Tuesday Hub days as scheduled throughout semester. Obviously if there are significant extenuating circumstances there may be exceptions, however you will need to catch up on input and course material presented during times you were absent.

An absence of more than 25% of lectures or tutorials in a unit is normally regarded as too great to sustain active engagement in that unit and may impact adversely on the student's learning.

Engagement:

It is expected that you will fully engage in all aspects of the unit. You will be expected to participate in discussion, feedback and group work as a normal part of tertiary study.

Respect:

It is expected that you will respect the views of fellow students, lecturers and speakers who are part of your course experience. Whilst we might not all personally hold the same views / beliefs in all areas, there is no place for aggressive, abusive or manipulative words/actions in Stirling courses. We do encourage robust dialogue and debate but always in the spirit of respect and deep listening.

* If you are in breach of this expectation you will be asked to leave the class and possibly be subject to disciplinary action.

Assessments:

Undergraduate:

500 word leadership engagement report: Topic #1	15%	Due 22 nd March
1000 word response to reading	30%	Due 5 th April
500 word leadership engagement report: Topic #2	15%	Due 10 th May
1500 word Integrative Essay	40%	Due 7 th June

Postgraduate: (As above with increased word limits – see below)

750 word leadership engagement report: Topic #1	15%
1500 word response to reading	30%
750 word leadership engagement report: Topic #2	15%
3000 word Integrative essay	40%

LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT REPORT #1 - Due date 22nd March, 2019

Summarise your initial thoughts and reflections on your understanding of Christian leadership and how these ideas relate to you personally.

Your report could include:

- Initial ideas and thoughts on how you view Christian leadership
- What leadership myths / stereotypes have been challenged for you
- How you see your own leadership potential and style
- The contexts in which your leadership is currently being practiced
- Your ideas/aspirations around leadership and creating change in the world
- Biblical texts that have prompted reflection on Christian leadership

RESPONSE TO READING – Due date 5th April, 2019

Write a reflective review on the following article:

Henri J.M. NOUWEN, *In The Name of Jesus. Reflections on Christian Leadership*, p 19-93. (This article will be available on ARK for download)

Please answer as personally and practically as possible. Provide your response in essay form rather than numbered points, but follow the guideline below

1. Provide a brief summary of the books overall theme
2. What are the main points of the book and its approach to leadership and praxis, as you perceive them?
3. What questions about your own life, leadership or spirituality did the book raise for you?

4. How did the book challenge you and your understanding of leadership and how will you respond to these challenges?
5. What insights from the book did you gain into your own particular exploration of leadership and purpose this year?
6. What further questions would you like to ask the author and why?

LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT REPORT #2 - Due date 10th May, 2019

Choose from **one** of the following options A or B:

A. Pick one (maybe two at a push) leader who has spoken at the Hub who has particularly inspired you or challenged you throughout the Semester.

Your report should include:

- Brief details of the speaker (bio / topics of input / expertise etc.)
- What stood out to you – include quote/s from Input or books etc.
- What are you learning about leadership in the real world from this person?
- How is God shaping you in these encounters? (Biblical / spiritual disciplines etc.)
- What do you plan to do in response?

B. Choose a theme that has emerged from a range of different speakers at the Hub (e.g. sacrifice, integrity, passion etc.)

Your report should include:

- Details of the theme and which speakers alluded to said theme
- Why you have been challenged / encouraged by these ideas
- What are you learning about leadership in the real world reflecting on this theme?
- How is God shaping in? (Biblical / spiritual disciplines etc.).
- What do you plan to do in response?

INTEGRATIVE ESSAY – Due date 7th June, 2019

An integrative essay is essentially a reflective paper that draws together (integrates) various areas of learning, experience and information that you have gleaned throughout your semester in Catalyst.

The primary purpose of the integrative essay is to draw connections between different experiences, experiments, conversations, speakers and disciplinary perspectives (e.g. other subjects of study) that you have participated in throughout the year.

TOPIC:

Articulate your understanding of Christian leadership and formation and the implications for transformational social impact and creating positive change in our world.

Your essay should ideally include:

- Your understanding of ‘Christian leadership’ (and where it comes from)
- Your understanding of formation.
- Reflection on how you have been shaped by various experiences, influential voices (speakers, writers etc.) over the past semester and what you are beginning to discern about leadership, praxis and social transformation.
- What formative disciplines / patterns have helped shape you and why?
- What parts of the Bible have been significant in shaping you and your understanding of Christian leadership?
- Reference to books, articles that contribute to your reflections

APPENDIX 4

INTENSIVE SCHEDULE

Intensive Schedule (February 25th – 26th):

DATE & TIME	TOPIC
Monday 25 th Feb	
9.00am - 9.45am	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A little about me and what I believe Starting with “Why” <i>TEXT: Leadership Questionnaire</i>
9.45am - 11.00am	Demythologizing Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts of leadership Understanding stereotypes Leadership and influence <i>TEXT: Brene Brown p. 19-43</i>
11.00am – 11.15am	MORNING TEA
11.15am - 12.30pm	Reflective Practice and Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Reflective Practice <i>TEXT: Langmead: Theological Reflection in Mission and Ministry</i> <i>TEXT: Brown: A Leaders Guide to Reflective Practice</i>
12.30pm - 1.30pm	LUNCH
1.30pm-2.00pm	Course outline, expectations and assessments <i>TEXT: Course Outline / ARK</i>
2.00pm - 3.00pm	Biblical Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional biblical models of Christian leadership Biblical texts and insights A Christ-Centred model Why Jesus is a problematic but ultimate leader <i>TEXT: Henri Nouwen</i> <i>TEXT: Temptation of Jesus Matthew 4:1-11</i>
3.00pm-3.15pm	AFTERNOON TEA
3.15pm – 4.15pm	Christian Leadership for the World (not just the church) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new imagination for Christian leadership Everyday contexts for Christian leadership and influence <i>TEXT: Timothy Keller Chapter 11.</i> <i>TEXT: Gabe Lyons Ch. 5.</i>
Tuesday 26 th Feb	
9.00am - 10.30am	Leadership, Identity and Praxis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What type of leader are you? ACTIVITY Who you are or what you do Who do you listen to? <i>TEXT: Simon Walker p.5-16</i>
10.30am-10.45am	MORNING TEA
10.45am-12.00pm	Leadership Formation – practices that sustain us <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation vs. information Popular culture and formation Developing practices towards formation <i>TEXT: Scandrette Ch. 3</i> <i>TEXT: Willard Ch. 1</i>

APPENDIX 5

HUB SCHEDULE

LFandP Tuesday Hub Schedule: 1.5 hours (11.30am-1pm)

DATE	TOPIC	RESOURCES (Readings / Clips etc.)
26 th March	Deep listening and leadership The role of silence, humility, and attentiveness in leadership formation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Ury – Role of Listening (YouTube) • Julia Baird – UD Graduation Address 2018 • Ignatian practices of silence – resource Reading: Chittister Ch. 2 FORMATION PRACTICE #1 Stillness Prayer
2 nd April	Character and leadership The role of suffering and sacrifice in building character and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon Sinek – (YouTube) • Trump & Ardern (MP4) Reading: David Brookes Ch. 1 FORMATION PRACTICE #2 Reduce, Simplify, Focus
7 th May	Vulnerability and leadership How do we work in weakness / powerlessness as well as strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brene Brown: Why Your Critics Aren't The Ones Who Count (TED Talk You tube) Reading: Brene Brown – Vulnerability Reading: To Whom Should I Listen? FORMATION PRACTICE #3 Who Do We Listen To?
14 th May	Practical servant leadership The role of service and activism in leadership	Reading – Augsburg Ch 6 Reading – Simon Sinek Ch. 3 FORMATION PRACTICE #4 Identifying My Cause
21 st May	Integrated leadership The role of scripture and the character of Christ in our formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alan Roxburgh: Dwelling in the Word – Luke 10 (Video File) Reading- M. Kitchen “Reading the NT” FORMATION PRACTICE #5 Sermon on the Mount for Peditation – Augsburg Appendix 3.
28 th May	Transformative leadership What does transformation look like (personally and in others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What is Transformational Leadership” Youtube Reading: Scandrette Ch. 5. FORMATION PRACTICE #6 Creating change for my generation

APPENDIX 6

LEADERSHIP SURVEY #1 – COHORT 2019

General Introductory Questions:

Name:

Gender:

Religious affiliation:

Ethnicity:

Personal Leadership Questions:

- * What is your one sentence definition of leadership?
- * Do you see yourself as having leadership capacities? (Explain)
- * In what contexts are you able to express your leadership?
- * What sort of leader do you see yourself as:
 - Collaborative
 - Dictatorial
 - Controlling
 - Relational
 - Charismatic
 - Other (please specify)
- * List your personal characteristics that you see as leadership strengths:
- * List your personal characteristics that you see as leadership weaknesses:
- * What are the positive aspects of current leadership that you have observed (e.g. locally in your church / organisation or broadly in contemporary culture) What are negative aspects? Which is more predominant?

General Leadership Questions:

- * What is the most important quality in a leader (Rank in order of importance)
 - Discipline

- Control
- Honesty
- Humility
- Charisma
- Vision
- Integrity
- Purpose
- Authenticity
- Influence

* What is the most important competency of a leader (Rank in order of importance)

- Conflict management
- Verbal communication
- Training other leaders
- Setting and reaching goals
- Listening skills
- Vigorous work ethic
- Personal Boundaries
- Organisational structure and accountability
- Interpersonal skills
- Self-Care (work/life balance)

* Do you have a high regard for the leaders of our nation? (Explain)

* Describe two examples of leadership in current Australian public life that you admire and why:

Emerging Leadership Questions:

*An emerging leader is best defined by:

- A basic proficiency at performing leadership tasks
- Being young and having some experience in a leadership role
- Constantly learning new skills and gaining new experience in leadership
- An interest in progressing professionally
- Other (please specify)

* The following resources are essential in the development of emerging leaders: (Rank in order of importance)

- Higher educational achievement
- A mentor / coach / supervisor

- Involvement in an organisation that will provide leadership training
- Motivational resource repository – e.g. websites, books, articles, blogs, speakers, YouTube clips etc.
- A place in a team of leaders
- Others (please specify)

Christian Leadership Questions:

- * Define the difference between an effective leader and an effective *Christian* leader
- * Describe the characteristics of excellent Christian leadership
- * Describe the characteristics of poor Christian leadership
- * List two Christian leaders from history who you admire and why
- * Describe your understanding of Christian leadership formation
- * What are the most acceptable contexts in which to exercise Christian leadership (Rank in order of acceptability)
 - University student group
 - Local church
 - NGO
 - Workplace
 - Volunteering at a soup kitchen
 - Parent committee at the local kindergarten
 - Coaching under 16s Netball
 - Other (please specify)
- * Do your Christian convictions change with circumstances and culture?
- * What do you consider to be the most important result of practical Christian leadership (Rank in order of importance)
 - People come to know Jesus personally and make a decision of faith
 - People begin attending a church community
 - People are exposed to the values of the Kingdom of God
 - Nobody is harmed
 - People learn to trust and respect people of Christian faith
 - People experience love, grace, justice and acceptance
- * Comment on your understanding of the relationship between Christian leadership and creating change in the world.

* List some characters from the Bible who you see as models of Christian leadership (and why).

*What are the most important aspects of Christian leadership formation for a younger generation of leaders? (Rank in order of importance)

- Training courses that offer awards in leadership
- Mentors and coaches
- Developing practices and disciplines that deepen character and spiritual life
- Freedom and safety to experiment with ideas and receive feedback
- Listening to inspirational speakers
- Studying the Bible
- Developing competency in theological reflection on experience
- Setting and reaching short-term goals in leadership training

* Any other comments / observations about Christian leadership that you would like to offer.

APPENDIX 7

SAMPLE FORMATION PRACTICE

FORMATION PRACTICE #6 (20 minutes)

REFLECTING ON CHANGE & CREATING CHANGE

Please fill out the following questions.

Keep a copy for yourself and email a copy of your responses to pmartin@stirling.edu.au

QUESTIONS

Personal change - looking back:

1. How do you understand leadership differently now, as compared to the beginning of this course?
2. What has been most helpful to you in your personal leadership understanding and development?
3. What have you enjoyed most about the Leadership, Formation and Praxis unit?

World change – looking ahead:

4. What are the key areas in which you would like to further develop your capacities for leadership?
5. How do you understand the relationship between Christian leadership and creating positive change in our world?
6. What are the contexts in which you would like to explore Christian leadership in the future?
7. What are the things that you think need changing in our world and how do you think Christian leadership can contribute?
8. What would you do if you knew you could do anything and wouldn't fail?
9. What is one thing you can start doing toward that goal (in question 8) within the next 24 hours?

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

ARK ONLINE RESOURCE

[Dashboard](#) / [My Units](#) / [Meta: Leadership Formation and Praxis](#)

[Turn editing on](#)

General

Welcome to LEADERSHIP & PRAXIS DP1/8002S for 2019!

This unit will enable you to identify and articulate a personal sense of leadership formation. Together we will explore key leadership competencies; reflect on the integration of belief and their behaviour; and communicate an understanding of Christian leadership as we engage with real-world contexts with a focus on promoting positive change in the world. A feature of this unit will be receiving input from a variety of Christian leaders and entrepreneurs. Specific formational issues will be explored such as: understanding influence, transformational spiritual practices, an integrated approach to theology and work, resilience and character.

RESOURCES

Please see below for a range of resources. More will be added throughout semester so tune in regularly.

For assessment information including summaries, submission links and due dates: please access the Leadership, Formation and Praxis child sites.

- [INTENSIVE OUTLINE 2019](#) 71.6KB PDF document
- [READER RESPONSE ARTICLE - Nouwen p.19-93](#) 2.1MB PDF document
- [Course Outline 2019](#) 423.1KB PDF document
- [UNIT READINGS - INTENSIVE](#)
- [UNIT READINGS - Throughout Semester](#)
- [INTENSIVE INPUT SLIDES](#)

DEEP LISTENING & LEADERSHIP 26th March 2019

KEY: To explore the role of deep listening (as opposed to physically hearing with our ears); to explore the role of silence, humility and attentiveness in formation.

- [READING: Ignatian Practice of Deep Listening](#) 1.4MB PDF document
- [READING: Chittister](#) 748KB PDF document
- [READING: Julia Baird Graduation Address](#) 440.7KB PDF document
- [FORMATION PRACTICE 1 - Stillness Prayer](#) 54.2KB PDF document
- [Deep Listening Slideshow](#) 14.1MB PDF document
- [William Ury TEDx Talk](#) 51.6MB Video file (MP4)
- [Scott Vawter - Guest Speaker](#)

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No recent activity

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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